

COLLINS
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GRAMMAR
PATTERNS
2: NOUNS AND
ADJECTIVES



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Foreword

When *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs* was published, I commented that it was 'one of the most important and useful publications' in the COBUILD range. This volume is the second in the innovative Grammar Patterns series, dealing with patterns of nouns and adjectives.

To use words correctly and effectively, you have to arrange them in appropriate patterns. The patterns that are special to a particular word you will find in *Collins COBUILD English Usage*; this book, on the other hand, deals with the patterns associated with groups of words. It gives you a comprehensive account of the noun and adjective patterns of English, using the evidence of The Bank of English which now stands at 350 million words of current written and spoken English.

The presentation of patterns is not new, of course, in language teaching. In the fifties and sixties the leading reference book for teachers and learners was A.S. Hornby's *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* (OUP 1954). In that book, the principal grammatical patterns of the language were set out using simple formulas, and the typical vocabulary for each pattern was shown in examples. Then for a number of years patterns went out of fashion in linguistics, but the advent of COBUILD in the eighties brought back an appreciation of the importance of the environment of a word to its usage, even its meaning.

This last point is very exciting, because it shows that these pattern grammars are much more than convenient ways of presenting the regularities of usage. During the early research days of COBUILD, I became convinced that the meaning of a word was closely related to the choice of which words occurred nearby, and their position. Fifteen years ago this was actually difficult to think about; now the evidence is in front of you.

Through the reliability and objectivity of the computer evidence, words can be subdivided according to pattern, and patterns can be seen to correlate with meaning – that is to say, words with similar patterns have similar meanings.

For example, in Section 38 you will find the pattern consisting of a noun followed by the preposition *over* and a noun group. The nouns with this pattern fall into several different meaning groups, but many of them are used to talk about reactions (the 'fuss' group) or feelings (the 'grief' group). The noun group following the preposition shows the cause of the reaction or feeling.

...a growing crisis over education... an outcry over the savaging of a six-year-old girl... the growing scandal over the alleged smuggling of weapons from Lebanon... Violence over reports of police corruption

...grief over the death of his wife... mounting pessimism over the chances of reaching agreement.

We can now see that this relation between meaning and pattern is inevitable – that meaning has a profound and systematic effect on usage. I am confident that our continuing research in this area will bring meaning and pattern closer and closer together.

So this book is not just a set of useful patterns of English that have to be learned. It is also a partial explanation of why the patterns are as they are, and why particular nouns and adjectives have them – as the example above makes clear. This makes the patterns easier to understand and recall, and enables you to use the language accurately and productively.

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Introduction

This book presents all the patterns of English nouns and adjectives, and relates these patterns to meaning. It is a companion volume to the *Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs*. The coding is based on the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* (1995).

What patterns are

In most cases, a noun or adjective pattern is the noun or adjective and the words that come after it. These words are often a prepositional phrase or a finite or non-finite clause. Sometimes, however, the pattern involves words that come before the noun or adjective. For example, a noun may follow a preposition, or the clause in which the noun or adjective occurs may begin with *it*.

In the *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary*, these patterns are coded in a simple way whereby the elements in each pattern are set out in the order in which they occur. Thus, **N that** means 'noun followed by a *that*-clause' and **ADJ for n** means 'adjective followed by *for* and a noun group'. The capital N or ADJ indicates the noun or adjective that you are concerned with; other nouns or adjectives in the pattern are indicated in small letters. For example, **ADJ n** means 'adjective followed by a noun' but **adj N** means 'noun preceded by an adjective'. We have used this same pattern notation in this book.

A pattern of a noun or adjective includes only those words that are typical of or significant for that particular noun or adjective, not those that are just part of general noun group structure. For example, most nouns in English are often used in noun groups that begin with *the*. For the pattern **the N**, however, we include only those nouns or those senses of nouns which always or usually follow *the*. However, we do also include sections describing the patterns of comparative and superlative adjectives, which can be used with all adjectives that have a comparative and superlative form. We also include patterns which are used with all graded adjectives.

Some patterns occur very frequently, some are used with only a few nouns or adjectives. In this book, we cover over 200 patterns. However, all the patterns are based on a very small number of simple elements - **n** (noun or noun group), **adj** (adjective or adjective group), **to-inf** (infinitive clause), **that** (that-clause), **wh** (wh-clause), and so on. A list of the elements is given inside the front cover of the book.

The sections

This book is divided into two parts: part 1 gives information on nouns and part 2 gives information on adjectives. The first sections in part 1 deal with the basic types of noun and how they are used. The first sections in part 2 deal with the basic types of adjectives.

Most of the other sections in this book deal with one particular pattern, and most sections have the same basic arrangement. Below we give an outline of what you will find in each section.

Pattern information

Each section begins with a heading showing the main pattern dealt with in the section and a simple description of the pattern, together with any other necessary information. The beginning of section 23 is shown below.

clause. For example, in *He seems keen to return to active politics*, he is the Subject of *he seems keen* and it is also the understood Subject of *return to active politics*. However, in *False documents are easy to obtain*, *false documents* is the Subject of *false documents are easy* but it is the understood Object, not the understood Subject of *obtain*.

subjunctive The subjunctive form of a verb is in most cases the base form used in certain clauses in place of the present or past tense, e.g. *It's important that Mahler's music be forever dangerous*.

subordinate clause A subordinate clause is one that is dependent on the main clause. A subordinate clause typically begins with a subordinating conjunction, such as *although*, *because*, or *when*, or with an adverb such as *however*, e.g. *Although it's essentially a language project we are interested in talking to people about farming... No one should invest for tax reasons alone, however attractive they may appear*.

superlative The superlative form of an adjective consists of the adjective with *-est*, e.g. *biggest*, or the adjective following *most*, e.g. *most interesting*. Only **graded adjectives** have a superlative form.

that-clause A that-clause is a finite clause that follows a noun or an adjective and often, though not always, begins with *that*, e.g. *There are constant rumours that the soldiers are about to attack again... It was interesting the letter had come directly from her*. A relative clause is not a that-clause. In *There are rumours that won't go away*, the clause *that won't go away* is a relative clause. It gives more information about *rumours* but does not indicate the content of the rumours. However, in *There were rumours that war had broken out*, the clause *that war had broken out* is a that-clause; it indicates the content of the rumours.

to-infinitive clause A to-infinitive clause is a clause beginning with the to-infinitive form of a verb, e.g. *It seems a pity to disappoint him... Was she difficult to live with?*

ungraded adjective An ungraded adjective is one that does not have a comparative or superlative form and that does not follow a grading adverb.

verb group A verb group may consist of just one verb, e.g. *I went to Wales last year*, or it may also contain one or more auxiliaries, e.g. *I have been thinking about your offer*; a modal, e.g. *Colleges should provide needed information*; or the negative form, e.g. *Grace did not answer the question directly*.

wh-clause A wh-clause is a finite clause that begins with a wh-word, e.g. *They are involved in the decision as to where they're going to work... Police are still uncertain how she died*. A wh-clause indicates that something is uncertain or unknown. In this book, we sometimes use the term 'wh-clause' as a general term covering both the finite clause and the non-finite wh-to-inf clause. See **wh-to-inf clause**.

when/if clause The term 'when/if clause' is used in section 112 to indicate a finite clause beginning with *when* or *if* which is not a wh-clause because it does not indicate that something is uncertain or unknown. It refers to a situation that occurs, or may occur, e.g. *It'll be exciting when we finally get to hold our baby*.

wh-to-inf clause A wh-to-inf clause is a non-finite clause that begins with a wh-word and a to-infinitive, e.g. *I had to make the decision whether to go or not*. Wh-to-inf clauses refer to something that is uncertain or unknown.

wh-word A wh-word is a word such as *what*, *why*, *whether*, *how*, or *if*.

Nouns

1 Count nouns

Count nouns refer to individual people or things. They have a plural form, usually formed by adding *s*, though there are some irregular plurals (see Collins COBUILD English Grammar). When they are singular, they are usually used with a determiner, such as *a*, *each*, *his*, *that*, or *the*, or with a possessive such as *John's*. When they are plural, they may be used either without a determiner or with a determiner such as *any*, *some*, or *the*, or a number.

These nouns are labelled **N-COUNT** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

*I don't think the **answer** to high divorce rates is to make divorce more difficult. There aren't any easy **answers**.*

*Set in provincial Germany in the Thirties, the **book** is a subtle, elegiac exploration of the author's childhood relationship with his grandfather. 'Her **books** are based on her own experience of learning to fly a helicopter,' a spokeswoman said.*

*The situation in the **city** was generally calm. These **cities** were supposed to absorb migrants coming to the capital.*

*Peter was still in hospital having extensive treatment to save the sight in his right **eye**. His **eyes** were red as if he had been crying.*

*The younger **girl** was taken by the SEQEB helicopter to the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane. A few rows behind her the two **girls** she'd noticed earlier were sitting close together, not speaking.*

*This **issue** is by no means as clear cut as his letter suggests. The **issues** are complex.*

When a singular count noun is the Subject of a verb, the verb is singular. If a plural count noun is the Subject of a verb, the verb is plural.

*The **meeting** in New York was the first high-level contact since the end of the war in 1973. His political **meetings** were open to all and he was brutal with hecklers.*

*There are also situations where a **woman** is not seen as so much of a threat as a male colleague.*

***Women** are as much at risk as men of developing diseases from smoking.*

Here is a list of some of the most frequent nouns which have at least one count sense:

account	book	child	cup
act	box	choice	customer
agency	boy	city	daughter
agreement	brother	claim	day
animal	budget	class	deal
answer	building	club	decision
area	call	coast	demand
army	campaign	colour	department
association	car	committee	detail
attempt	card	company	difference
baby	career	computer	director
ball	cent	conference	doctor
band	centre	contract	dollar
bank	century	cost	door
bed	chairman	council	drug
board	championship	country	economy
body	charge	couple	end

event	league	plant	spokesman
executive	letter	player	stage
eye	level	point	standard
face	line	position	star
fact	list	pound	start
family	machine	president	state
feeling	man	price	statement
field	manager	problem	station
figure	march	process	step
film	mark	product	story
firm	market	program	street
foot	match	programme	student
form	meeting	project	style
friend	member	queen	subject
fund	mile	question	system
game	mind	race	table
garden	minister	range	teacher
girl	minute	rate	team
goal	model	reason	television
government	moment	record	test
group	month	region	thing
hall	move	relation	time
hand	name	relationship	title
head	nation	report	tour
heart	newspaper	result	town
hill	number	road	tree
holiday	office	role	type
horse	officer	room	union
host	operation	rule	unit
hour	order	sale	view
house	page	scene	visit
husband	parent	season	voice
idea	park	seat	vote
image	parliament	secretary	way
increase	part	series	week
island	partner	service	weekend
issue	party	share	wife
job	patient	shop	window
judge	performance	side	winner
kid	period	sign	woman
kind	person	sister	word
king	photo	situation	worker
lady	picture	son	writer
language	piece	song	year
law	place	sort	
leader	plan	source	

Singular count nouns without a determiner

Although count nouns are normally used with a determiner when they are singular, there are some specific cases when a singular count noun is used without a determiner.

- 1 After nouns such as *kind*, *sort*, or *type* and the preposition *of*.

*He has developed a control system that relies on **three kinds of computer**.*

*There isn't any money to undertake **this type of project**.*

- 2 After nouns such as *piece*, *bit*, and *fragment* and the preposition *of*.

*In 1908, thousands of square kilometres of Siberia around the Tunguska River were devastated by a **fragment of comet** just 50 metres across.*

*Finally decorate with a **piece of peach** and a biscuit.*

*The soldier held up the broken **piece of strap** to show him.*

- 3 After noun groups indicating size or distance and the preposition *of*.

*They had the end of the hall to negotiate, then **sixty yards of corridor**.*

*She had **two feet of intestine** removed.*

- 4 After the noun change and the preposition *of* or *in*.

*Then, as now, many Conservative MPs wanted a **change of leader**.*

*The **change in mood** was a consequence of several factors.*

- 5 After the noun choice and the preposition *of*.

*You may find **your choice of tree** restricted by the type of soil you have and by the climate.*

*He had been lucky in **his choice of wife**.*

- 6 After nouns such as *role* and *job* and the preposition *of* or *as*.

*That is because **the job of manager** never really appealed to Bonds.*

*Tom Ormerod, in **his role as judge**, provided informative tips as he talked members through each section.*

*There's an element in me which enjoys **the role of victim**.*

- 7 When referring to a unique job.

*She has been **captain** since 1986.*

*Why does he want to be **president**?*

- 8 In pairs and lists.

*According to Conservative thinking, a better balance between **employer and employee** would in this way be restored.*

*Jerusalem's architects could hardly ignore the rich heritage of the religious capital of the world – a holy city for **Muslim, Jew and Christian** alike.*

***Therapist and patient** work together to modify inappropriate patterns of thought and behaviour.*

- 9 Before someone's name, when saying what they are. This occurs in newspapers and broadcasting.

***Author Peter Bart** had an insider's view of the proceedings.*

***Mother-of-two Angela Johnson** studies at Manchester College, Oxford.*

2 Uncount nouns

Uncount nouns refer to things such as substances, qualities, feelings, or types of activity. They have no plural form: they do not treat the things they refer to as countable. (In order to treat things as countable, they need to be used with a phrase like *a piece of*, *two lumps of*, or *an item of*).

These nouns are labelled **N-UNCOUNT** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

Uncount nouns are usually used without a determiner, but they are often preceded by a determiner such as *some*, *all*, or *her*, or a possessive like *Jane's*. They can be used with a definite determiner like *the* or *this* when the thing they refer to is specified or can be understood from the context, e.g. *It was a nice room but I didn't think much of the furniture.*

If in doubt about any aspect of a deal, take advice from a stockbroker.

I have found great comfort in your letters and comments.

There is some concern in Labor's ranks about the party's prospects in the seat of Thuringowah.

Try to keep any conflict between you and your ex-partner to a minimum.

She had, she discovered to her pleasure, a talent for making her fellow guests laugh.

All research has shown that defendants distrust the magistrates' court and have a better chance of acquittal if they go to the Crown Court.

Uncount nouns can also be used with *the*, or in many cases *a*, when they are preceded by modifiers or followed by qualifiers, e.g. *an inexplicable happiness*; *the happiness of the individual*. (There are a number of nouns, like *advice*, *information*, and *furniture*, which can never be used with *a*.)

The fall in share prices reflects a general anxiety about the prospects for the world economy.

He seems to have a mystic faith in his ability to communicate with the British people.

Part of the fun of a self-catering holiday is getting your hands on all that wonderful, local fresh produce that food writers keep banging on about.

It should be possible to build a robot with the intelligence of a mouse.

Tom Keneally writes sentimentally about a youth untroubled by sex, drugs and rock'n'roll.

When an uncount noun is the Subject of a verb, the verb is singular.

It may be some time before electricity is available from anything other than a gas-powered generator.

Here is a list of some of the most frequent nouns which have at least one uncount sense:

abuse	capacity	credit	export
access	care	cricket	exposure
accommodation	cash	culture	failure
action	charity	damage	faith
activity	coal	danger	fashion
administration	coffee	defence	fate
adventure	collapse	democracy	feeling
advice	comedy	design	fiction
agriculture	comfort	development	fighting
aid	commitment	discipline	finance
air	communication	distribution	fire
alcohol	compensation	duty	football
anger	competition	east	force
anxiety	concern	electricity	fortune
approval	confidence	emotion	freedom
art	conflict	employment	fun
assistance	consideration	energy	furniture
attention	construction	entry	gas
beauty	contact	equipment	glass
behaviour	control	equity	gold
belief	corruption	evidence	grace
blood	courage	existence	growth
boxing	coverage	expectation	happiness
broadcasting	cream	expense	health
business	creation	experience	heat

help	management	provision	sunshine
history	material	publication	support
honour	medicine	publicity	surgery
horror	membership	quality	survival
housing	milk	racing	talk
ice	money	radio	taste
illness	motion	rain	telephone
import	music	reaction	television
importance	nature	reading	tension
independence	news	reality	therapy
industry	noise	recognition	time
infection	north	relief	today
inflation	observation	religion	tomorrow
influence	opposition	rescue	tonight
information	ownership	research	trade
intelligence	painting	resistance	traffic
interest	paper	respect	training
introduction	passion	responsibility	transport
investment	pay	revenue	travel
involvement	peace	safety	trouble
iron	permission	salt	trust
jazz	philosophy	sand	truth
joy	play	science	unemployment
justice	pleasure	security	unity
killing	possession	sight	use
knowledge	potential	silence	value
labour	poverty	sleep	violence
lack	power	smoke	water
land	practice	snow	wealth
language	prayer	society	weather
leadership	preparation	software	weight
leave	pressure	south	welfare
legislation	pride	spending	west
life	production	status	work
light	progress	strength	worry
love	promotion	stuff	writing
luck	property	success	yesterday
luxury	protection	sugar	youth

3 Variable nouns

Variable nouns are nouns which combine the behaviour of count and uncount nouns. They are like count nouns when they refer to an instance or more than one instance of something, e.g. *an injustice*; *injustices*, or to individual members of a class, e.g. *a cake*; *cakes*. Otherwise they behave like uncount nouns, referring to a substance or thing in more general terms.

These nouns are labelled N-VAR in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

They ate all their chicken mixture and nearly all the stewed apple.

She returned to the kitchen for a tray on which were toast, butter, an apple, and a jar of marmalade.

There was a bowl of red apples on the sill.

Comparison between private and state schools reveals the distinct advantage in attention afforded to public schoolchildren.

If you make a comparison between the UK and some of the other major territories, we're charging too much.

Despite exhaustive **comparisons** of twin pairs in which one was ill, the other healthy, the study produced little.

Crime and worries over living standards are scaring some liberals out of the country altogether.

Though few people ever witness a **crime** and fewer still are victims of one, all of us are made to feel uneasy by the way newspapers portray crime.

Israeli law does not allow prosecution for alleged **crimes** more than 20 years old.

There followed four highly adventurous visits to this little-known land of mountains, bush and **desert**.

A depleted river could one day become no river at all, turning a once fertile plain into a **desert**. Our nation is better known for its dry red rocks and **deserts** than its mountains, ice and snow.

Student newspapers report on social life, but have virtually nothing to say about **education**.

In Kent, for example, a relatively rich county, only five per cent of three and four year olds receive an **education** in a nursery class.

Many immigrant parents expect their daughters to get good **educations** and pursue careers as well as behave in traditionally feminine ways.

He stays in **prison** because a government official has decided that the case does not merit further investigation.

Staff were called in from a **prison** nearby to help quell the violence.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, spoke today on the problems of British **prisons**.

'I'll never forgive her for this,' Pamela said, her lovely face contorted by **rage** and grief.

One day, when I had worked 12 hours without a break, he flew into a **rage** because he had found two small typing errors.

We never knew why, but he was in one of his **rages** again.

In some cases information against people is based purely on gossip and **rumour**.

The president dismissed a **rumour** going the rounds here that some of his troops had staged a coup.

The Democrat front-runner fought desperately to prevent her answering questions about **rumours** of his adultery.

When a variable noun in the singular or uncount form is the Subject of a verb, the verb is singular. When a variable noun in the plural is the Subject of a verb, the verb is plural.

The hospital has launched an inquiry.

More hospitals are being forced to rely on the private sector to provide the patients' needs.

Here is a list of some of the most frequent nouns which have at least one variable sense:

ability	benefit	conspiracy	depth
abortion	birth	consultation	description
acceptance	bone	context	desert
accusation	breakfast	contrast	dialogue
acquisition	breath	controversy	diamond
admission	brick	conversion	diet
advance	cake	crime	direction
afternoon	cancer	crisis	discovery
amendment	challenge	criticism	discussion
amount	chance	currency	disease
analysis	change	custom	disorder
apple	childhood	dawn	dispute
argument	church	day	distance
arrest	cloud	death	divorce
arrival	college	debate	doubt
assessment	command	debt	drought
assurance	comment	decline	education
attack	comparison	defeat	effect
attitude	complaint	delay	effort
auction	compromise	delivery	election
autumn	confrontation	departure	emotion
battle	connection	depression	emphasis

entertainment	intention	prospect	spring
environment	interpretation	protest	strain
error	intervention	quantity	strategy
evening	interview	rage	stress
examination	invasion	rank	structure
excess	investigation	rape	struggle
excitement	investment	reaction	suicide
expansion	jail	recession	summer
expenditure	judgment	recommendation	supply
experiment	legend	recovery	suspicion
expression	length	reference	talent
fact	lifestyle	reform	tape
fear	loss	refusal	tax
fever	meaning	rent	technology
flame	monopoly	repair	temperature
flood	morning	reservation	territory
flow	murder	resignation	theft
forest	muscle	rest	theory
fraud	myth	retirement	threat
friendship	negotiation	rhythm	tradition
fruit	night	risk	tragedy
frustration	obligation	ritual	transfer
gain	opportunity	rope	transition
grief	output	routine	treatment
habit	pain	rumour	trial
hair	panic	salad	tribute
height	partnership	salary	triumph
hell	personality	school	turnover
heritage	piano	seed	uncertainty
hope	policy	sentence	understanding
hospital	prediction	shortage	uniform
imagination	preference	silence	university
improvement	pregnancy	sin	victory
incentive	prejudice	size	war
income	principle	skin	weight
indication	prison	sky	wind
injury	procedure	society	winter
insight	profit	space	wire
inspection	promotion	speculation	withdrawal
instinct	proof	speed	
insurance	prosecution	sport	

4 Mass nouns

Mass nouns are nouns which behave like uncount nouns when they refer to a substance, e.g. Use **detergent**, and like count nouns when they refer to types or brands of substance, e.g. Use a strong **detergent**; More **detergents** are now available.

These nouns are labelled N-MASS in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

When a mass noun in the singular or uncount form is the Subject of a verb, the verb is singular. When a mass noun in the plural is the Subject of a verb, the verb is plural.

I pass the lighted window of a shop where **perfume** is sold.

A designer label often guarantees a new **perfume** arrives with a ready-made public profile.

Department stores are finding that French **perfumes** are selling slowly.

Nouns of this type belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'CHEESE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BEER' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SILK' GROUP
- 4 THE 'PLASTIC' GROUP
- 5 THE 'LIPSTICK' GROUP
- 6 THE 'COUGH MIXTURE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'BLEACH' GROUP
- 8 THE 'ACID' GROUP
- 9 THE 'FOSSIL FUEL' GROUP
- 10 THE 'MOSS' GROUP
- 11 THE 'COMPOST' GROUP
- 12 THE 'FLUID' GROUP
- 13 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'CHEESE' GROUP

These nouns refer to food and the ingredients which go into food.

The roast chicken is filled with feta **cheese** and spinach in a parsley butter sauce.
I was seeking a **cheese** with a fine white mould, slightly crusted, with a creamy interior.
There are plenty of delicious **cheeses** made in the area including the famous Livarot, Camembert and Pont l'Évêque.

Meatballs, mashed potatoes and boiled cabbage were followed by sponge pudding and **custard**.

Proper ice-cream is based on a **custard** made from eggs, sugar and a cream-enriched milk.
There are also yoghurt **custards** appearing on supermarket shelves.

He looked like a man who had spent his youth eating **health food**.

Contrary to the implication of recent advertising, which states that a bag of crisps contains more vitamin C than an apple, crisps are not a **health food**.

I do yoga every day, use the gym three times a week and eat **health foods**.

He said detainees at the site were fed only **rice** and stale bread, which they had to soften in water.

Wild rice is not a **rice** but an aquatic grass.

The general principle is that long-and medium-grain **rices** are for savoury dishes and short-grain (in the west at least) is reserved for puddings.

baking powder	fat	mustard	shortening
bread	feed	oil 3	sorbet
brine	filling 2	olive oil	soup
butter	flour	pasta	spice
caviar	food	paste 2	spread
cereal	gelatine	pâté	starch
cheddar	goat cheese	pickle	stock
cheese	grain	pillaf	stuffing
chocolate	gravy	pillau	sweetener
chowder	gum 1	powder	syrup
chutney	health food	processed cheese	thickener
conservé	ice cream	protein	topping
consommé	jam	ravioli	vinaigrette
creamer	jelly	red meat	vinegar
curry powder	junk food	red pepper	wheat
custard	luncheon meat	relish	white sauce
dessert	margarine	rice	wholefood
dough	marmalade	salad cream	yeast
dressing	meat	salad-dressing	yeast extract
emulsifier	millet	salsa	
essence	mousse 1	sauce	
extract	muesli	seasoning	

2 THE 'BEER' GROUP

These nouns refer to different kinds of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, and the ingredients, like **malt**, which go into drinks.

The freshmen were drinking **beer** out of containers shaped like plastic flowerpots, looking sheepish and giggling.

Although Bass was a famous **beer**, the company that made it was not large and operated from a single brewery in Burton-upon-Trent.

European-style **beers** are widely available and the wines aren't too expensive.

She turned to the kettle and switching it on, reached for the jar of **coffee**.

It is a mellow **coffee**, with chocolate and tobacco tones.

The Allegro **coffees** we sell are the result of our ongoing quest for the finest **coffees** available in the marketplace today.

Everybody in the valley makes damson **gin**, she says.

Nearby too was the home of the owner and manufacturer of a special **gin**.

Like juniper, angelica is one of the main aromatics in some **gins**.

alcohol	cola	malt	sparkling wine
ale	cordial	malt whisky	spirit
Armagnac	decaf	milk	squash
beer	dessert wine	mineral water	stout
bitter	fortified wine	plonk	table wine
bourbon	gin	punch	tea
brandy	ginger ale	real ale	tonic 1
burgundy	ginger beer	red	vermouth
champagne	hock	rosé	vodka
cider	juice	rum	whiskey
claret	lager	Scotch	whisky
coffee	liqueur	sherry	white
cognac	liquor	soda	wine

3 THE 'SILK' GROUP

These nouns refer to different sorts of fabric.

Blends of synthetics with linen, **cotton**, or wool now dominate the clothing industry and will probably be the most popular textiles in the coming decade.

They wore clothes made from Ventile, a wonder **cotton** originally developed during World War II to protect pilots who crashed into icy water.

Manchester's machine-made **cottons** killed the trade in hand-woven cloth.

Suddenly this man swept down the aisle wearing a full-length black opera cloak lined in red **silk**.

These tones are picked up in cushions covered with a striped **silk**.

What makes it all work together is the upholstery: brilliant-coloured **silks** and velvets covered with scrolly gold script.

acrylic	damask	material	tweed
brocade	fabric	muslin	velvet
calico	filling 3	plaid	wool
chiffon	foam 3	polyester	worsted
chintz	fur	satin	yarn
cloth	leather	silk	
cotton	linen	suiting	

4 THE 'PLASTIC' GROUP

These nouns refer to solid substances, many of which are used in manufacturing and building.

He found a thin little notebook, covered in black **plastic**, glanced at it, and set it aside.
It is a biodegradable **plastic** which melts in temperatures above 50 degrees.
Over the past 40 years **plastics** have revolutionised the way we live.

Stainless steel is produced by combining **steel** with chromium.
Valves, valve guides and seats made of a harder **steel** were installed by Meredith Engineering at Welshpool.
A major problem in using iron and many **steels** is corrosion (rust).

alloy	granite	ore	underlay
basalt	hardwood	plastic	vinyl
ceramic	laminare	sandstone	wood
clay	lava	softwood	
enamel	limestone	steel	
flooring	metal	stone	

5 THE 'LIPSTICK' GROUP

These nouns refer to cosmetics and skin-care products.

She thought about his mother, with her dyed blonde hair and red **lipstick**.
A strong **lipstick** with little or no eye make-up has always been a very smart French look and is easy to achieve.
Although some **lipsticks** do contain sunscreen, the level of protection is rarely high enough.
My chemist suggested I change my **toothpaste** to Sensodyne, which I did many months ago.
Those children who use a fluoride **toothpaste** and are very careful about their tooth cleaning often have no cavities at all.
While most **toothpastes** contain anti-plaque, fluoride and gum protection ingredients, those for sensitive teeth have a different action.

aftershave	face cream	lipstick	shampoo
blusher	face powder	lotion	shaving cream
cleanser	foam 2	mascara	soap
cologne	foundation	moisturizer	spray
conditioner 1	fragrance	mousse 2	toilet water
cream	gel	nail polish	toner
deodorant	gloss	nail varnish	tonic 4
emollient	hairspray	oil 4	toothpaste
eyeliner	highlighter	perfume	
eye shadow	lacquer	scent	

6 THE 'COUGH MIXTURE' GROUP

These nouns refer to medications and health-care products.

Should I give her some **cough mixture** in addition to her inhaler?
Jones, of Whitehaven, was also suspended for three months after his sample showed a banned substance contained in a **cough mixture**.
My whole family suffers from coughs and colds during the winter but some **cough mixtures** cause drowsiness.
In the days before penicillin and antibiotics, zinc **ointment** was a much-used and successful treatment for serious tissue wounds.
An antiseptic eye **ointment** can be used to soothe the eye and prevent the spread of infection.
As consumers grow older, they want pills and **ointments** that will improve their health, fitness and appearance.

amphetamine	antiseptic	cream	laxative
anaesthetic	balm	decongestant	liniment
antacid	cough mixture	gas	medicine

mouthwash	salve	sunscreen
ointment	spermicide	tonic 2
rinse	sunblock	vaccine

7 THE 'BLEACH' GROUP

These nouns refer to chemical substances which are used, for example, for cleaning things, painting things, or killing things.

The bright boxes of soap and **bleach** stood in a neat row on a shelf on the wall.
Remove the fungus as soon as possible and treat the area where it was growing with a strong **bleach**.
Bleaches can erode the enamel and abrasives can damage the neck of the tooth during brushing.
At garden shops and nurseries, several types of **insecticide** for controlling plant bugs are available.
They sleep under mosquito nets impregnated with an **insecticide** which is harmless to humans.
They have **insecticides** to keep insects at bay, fungicides to eliminate the fungi on which young insects depend, and herbicides to keep the weeds out.
Most of the shabby rooms needed a face-lift and some **paint**.
The walls were decorated by Azim, using a brighter yellow in a glossy **paint** which is easy to wipe clean.
Choosing new wallpapers, fabrics and **paints** was fun.

abrasive	fertilizer	lubricant	propellant
adhesive	filler 1	nerve gas	repellent
bleach	fixative	paint	resin
cleaner	fungicide	paint stripper	sealant
conditioner 2	gas	paste 1	sealer
coolant	gloss	pesticide	softener
defoliant	glue	pigment	solvent
detergent	gum 3	plastic explosive	varnish
disinfectant	herbicide	polish	washing powder
dye	ink	poster paint	washing-up liquid
emulsion	insecticide	preservative	weedkiller
enamel	lacquer	primer	

8 THE 'ACID' GROUP

These nouns are the technical names for chemical substances.

These fossils can be easily dissolved out of limestones with **acid**.
It contains high amounts of laurate, a fatty **acid** used in the manufacture of soaps, shampoos and detergents.
Limescale removers for bathrooms and kitchens are all **acids** of one type or another.

acid	hydrate	peroxide	sulphide
alkali	nitrate	phosphate	
bromide	nucleic acid	silicate	
chloride	oxide	sulphate	

9 THE 'FOSSIL FUEL' GROUP

These nouns refer to different kinds of fuel.

A switch away from **fossil fuel** across the world could reduce carbon dioxide emissions by between 25 and 50 per cent.
The price of a **fossil fuel** can go up quite a lot if demand grows faster than supply.

Nouns

Fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, gas, and minerals are examples of nonrenewable resources.

crude	fossil fuel	solid fuel
crude oil	fuel	
diesel	oil	

10 THE 'MOSS' GROUP

These nouns refer to simple forms of plant and fungus.

There was **moss** growing on a pathway that wandered down the hillside among the trees.
I suspect it is not a **moss** but a lichen.
The window looked out on a bit of sandflat overgrown with thick, varicolored **mosses**.

fungus	lichen	mould
grass	moss	seaweed

11 THE 'COMPOST' GROUP

These nouns refer to substances in which plants grow, or substances which are added to soil.

Half fill the bowl with moist **compost** and plant several bulbs.
For this I made up a **compost** of decent loam, peat and grit.
Nearly all the peat-based and soil-based **composts** sold in garden shops contain chemical fertilizers and are thus not organic.

compost	mulch	soil
manure	potting compost	

12 THE 'FLUID' GROUP

These nouns are superordinate or general terms for a range of substances which have a particular physical form.

Now combine the aubergines with the other vegetables, remove and save the excess **liquid**.
At the end of the tour you are given a plastic cup of a distressingly insipid **liquid**.
They always say you should drink lots of **liquids** if you are ill, so I drank a lot of water.

concentrate	liquid
fluid	powder

13 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns of this type.

Plans to curb the sale of **tobacco** to children under 16 are to be debated in the Commons.
A scientist came up with the idea of a 'moist **tobacco**', a sweet nicotine-filled lolly.
He experimented with a wide variety of **tobaccos** before coming up with just the right mix.

effluent	poison	tobacco	wrapping paper
fur	pollen	venom	writing paper
gum	potpourri	wallpaper	
perfume	resin	wax	

5 Singular nouns

Singular nouns are nouns which have no plural form. They are always used with a determiner.

These nouns are labelled N-SING in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

The retail industry relies on its **ability** to persuade consumers to spend large amounts of money on stuff that they don't really need.

Most of the 300 to 400 junior civil servants facing the **axe** have little chance of a job elsewhere.
She racked her brain in an effort to recall what else she had meant to say. But her mind was a **blank**.

Nick and I both long to live in the **country** and we wanted to create a home that gave us a real sense of space and calm.

Keen to show the world the new image of India, he travelled the **globe** like no other Indian statesman before him.

The notes were written at the end of a busy morning and were written in a **hurry**.

Lane closures on the M25 near Gatwick brought traffic to a **standstill** for two hours yesterday.

This report takes a different **lack** from the 20 that have come before. Instead of warning about the dangers of smoking, it talks about the benefits of quitting.

When a singular noun is the Subject of a verb, the verb is singular.

The **atmosphere** was constructive, and I think the members of the executive were impressed.

Here is a list of some of the most frequent nouns which have at least one singular sense:

ability	buzz	equivalent	ground
absence	centennial	establishment	grounding
abundance	cinema	eternity	groundwork
acknowledgement	circus	ethos	hand
advocacy	clamour	executive	handle
aesthetic	cloak	exodus	harvest
affair	close	extent	heartbeat
affinity	coastguard	facade	height
aftermath	condition	farce	heyday
airing	conduct	fault	hold
ambience	consensus	feel	holocaust
apocalypse	cosmos	finish	honour
appearance	countdown	fit	horizon
appreciation	country	flair	hum
atmosphere	crawl	flip	hurry
avalanche	crunch	forefront	hush
average	crux	foundation	impasse
axe	culmination	founding	intake
backbone	dark	fray	interior
backlash	dearth	freestyle	jam
balance	demise	furnace	jungle
basis	desk	furor	keep
bedrock	din	fuss	ladder
bedside	distance	future	lakeside
beginning	downside	gallop	law
belief	downstairs	genesis	left
beloved	drag	giggle	level
bench	duty	giveaway	lift
bent	edge	globe	liking
blank	embodiment	gloom	look
brainchild	end	grapevine	lot
brink	ending	grasp	mail
bulk	epitome	grind	mainland

manner	pity	sea	throb
mantle	point	seaside	throne
mash	positive	senior	tow
mass	post	sense	trim
matter	premiership	shame	trot
maximum	presence	shine	twinkle
mean	present	shuffle	unconscious
measure	profusion	slant	underground
mess	province	snap	underneath
minimum	pulp	spirit	underworld
mint	racket	sprint	upstairs
mixture	rain	stab	upsurge
moon	rapport	stammer	vanguard
motherland	read	standstill	vener
nadir	rear	stink	vicinity
nature	reception	stir	vogue
ocean	respite	stop	vote
onset	resurgence	stranglehold	want
onus	return	stratosphere	waste
outdoors	reverse	subconscious	wealth
overthrow	right	succession	while
pace	riot	sun	wonder
passing	rise	swagger	word
past	riverside	swim	world
peach	rush	tack	wreckage
penchant	sale	tan	wrench
pendulum	say	taste	zenith
phone	scale	telephone	zodiac
pick	screen	text	
pickle	scrub	think	

6 Plural nouns

Plural nouns refer to more than one thing, or treat the things they refer to as consisting of more than one thing. They are used with a plural verb. If they are preceded by a determiner, it is a plural determiner such as *some*, *these*, or *other*, or a determiner such as *the* or *my* which can be used with either plural or singular forms. Note that although many of them end in *s*, not all of them do.

These nouns are labelled **N-PLURAL** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

Nouns of this type belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'BINOCULARS' GROUP
- 2 THE 'TROUSERS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'HIGH HEELS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CLOTHES' GROUP
- 5 THE 'PEOPLE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'CATTLE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'TONSILS' GROUP
- 8 THE 'DREADLOCKS' GROUP
- 9 THE 'SHAKES' GROUP
- 10 THE 'TROUBLES' GROUP
- 11 THE 'FRIES' GROUP
- 12 THE 'FOOTHILLS' GROUP

- 13 THE 'BUSINESS HOURS' GROUP
- 14 THE 'RICHES' GROUP
- 15 THE 'COSTS' GROUP
- 16 THE 'CONGRATULATIONS' GROUP
- 17 THE 'THOUGHTS' GROUP
- 18 THE 'BREAKABLES' GROUP
- 19 THE 'BASICS' GROUP
- 20 THE 'REMAINS' GROUP
- 21 THE 'ARTS' GROUP
- 22 THE 'BLOCK CAPITALS' GROUP
- 23 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'BINOCULARS' GROUP

These nouns refer to tools and instruments. Although they refer to a single object, they are sometimes used with *pair*.

He took out a small pair of binoculars and began his reconnaissance.

The boy stabbed my daughter in the leg with some scissors, causing horrific injuries.

These point-ended tweezers are accurate to a hair's-breadth and capable of pulling the shortest hair.

bellows	compasses	pincers	shears
binoculars	dividers	pliers	steps
calipers	field-glasses	scales	tongs
castanets	forceps	scissors	tweezers
clippers	nail scissors	secateurs	

2 THE 'TROUSERS' GROUP

These nouns refer to items of clothing or other things that are worn. Although they refer to a single item, they are sometimes used with *pair*.

He was wearing black jeans, a grey T shirt, and a sad, sad expression.

He's been given a new pair of reading glasses.

Carmen Ballesteros had bought her husband some swimming trunks.

His trousers were stained and wet.

bathing trunks	culottes	jockey shorts	shades
bell-bottoms	dark glasses	jodhpurs	shorts
bifocals	denims	knickers	slacks
blinderns	drawers	leggings	specs
blinkers	dungarees	Levi's	spectacles
bloomers	earmuffs	long Johns	sunglasses
blue jeans	flannels	overalls	suspenders
boxer shorts	flares	pantaloon	sweatpants
braces	glasses	panties	swimming trunks
breeches	goggles	pants	tights
briefs	handcuffs	pantyhose	trousers
chinos	headphones	plus-fours	trunks
cords	hipsters	pyjamas	underpants
corduroys	jeans	reading glasses	Y-fronts

3 THE 'HIGH HEELS' GROUP

These nouns refer to things worn on your feet or legs. (More general nouns such as *boot* and *shoe*, though usually used in the plural, are occasionally used in the singular, and so

are not included here.)

High heels are not sensible, but they are glorious.

I need some *nylons* and things.

flip-flops	high heels	spats
galoshes	lace-ups	spike heels
heels 3	nylons	spikes 3

4 THE 'CLOTHES' GROUP

These nouns refer to types of clothing.

Her *clothes* were drab.

I'll get you some *oilskins*, ma'am.

These emaciated workers dressed in *rags* were to be seen everywhere.

But when it comes to the clothes, choose casual *separates* which double as sportswear.

civvies	nightclothes	tails	undies
clothes	oilskins	thermals	vestments
co-ordinates	rags	threads	whites
fatigues	separates	togs	woollens
glad-rags	smalls	tweeds	
leathers	sweats	underclothes	

5 THE 'PEOPLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to groups of people. Some of them are always or typically preceded by *the*: see Section 14.

My *in-laws* are coming over for dinner.

The *masses* have the right to elect their president.

Many *people* might be surprised by the extent of the change that has taken place recently.

I'd pull those *troops* out right now.

all-comers	dregs	kin	ranks
ancients	emergency services	kith and kin	reinforcements
armed forces	fellows	lads 2	rowdies
authorities	folk	literati	scum
boat people	forces	masses	shock troops
brethren	fuzz	menfolk	staff
chattering classes	gays	military police	townsfolk
city fathers	gentry	paratroops	townspeople
clergy	glitterati	people	tradespeople
cognoscenti	greats	personnel	troops
craftspeople	hoi polloi	police	womenfolk
dramatis personae	in-laws	progeny	youth

Some nouns which refer to groups of people, for example *nobility* and *public*, are collective nouns: that is, they can be followed by either a singular or a plural verb. See Section 7.

6 THE 'CATTLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to types of animals.

Cattle are sometimes herded there, left for months to feed, then collected.

It is the best possible time of year for visits to marsh and estuary to see wintering geese and other *wildfowl*.

bacteria	poultry	wildfowl
cattle	stock	
fry	vermin	

7 THE 'TONSILS' GROUP

These nouns refer to parts of a person's or animal's body. (Many other nouns referring to parts of the body, for example *eye* and *leg*, are usually or often plural.)

'It was as if my *insides* were on fire,' he said.

Gary's *tonsils* are slightly swollen.

Whatever else was recently wrong with her, Wynette's *vocal cords* are still in belting form.

abdominals	features	hindquarters	privates
adenoids	genitalia	innards	tonsils
bowels	genitals	insides	viscera
entrails	giblets	loins	vocal cords
extremities	guts	private parts	withers

8 THE 'DREADLOCKS' GROUP

These nouns refer to hair.

Reggae star Eddy Grant was hurt yesterday when his 4ft *dreadlocks* were engulfed in flame in a movie set accident.

All he needs to do is cut his hair and shave off those stupid *sideburns*.

bangs 8	dreadlocks	sideboards 2	tresses
bunches 6	locks	sideburns	whiskers

9 THE 'SHAKES' GROUP

These nouns refer to undesirable physical or mental states or symptoms, or to physical problems of some kind. Some of them are always or typically preceded by *the*: see Section 14, meaning group 43. (*Agonies* and *cramps* also occur in a singular form with no determiner.)

I had a lot of stomach *cramps* and chest *cramps*.

Hiccups are very common and perfectly natural.

It was such a shock I had *hysterics*.

Then I started getting the *shakes*.

agonies	giggles	nerves	sniffles
bedsores	goose bumps	nits	split ends
blues	goose pimples	piles	stretch marks
cramps	hiccups	runs	withdrawal symptoms
crow's feet	hysterics	shakes	worms
DT's	jitters	shits	

10 THE 'TROUBLES' GROUP

These nouns refer to misfortunes that someone has experienced or is experiencing. (*Suffering* also occurs in a singular form with no determiner.)

Thanks to him, our **troubles** are over.

sorrows	troubles
sufferings	woes

11 THE 'FRIES' GROUP

These nouns refer to food.

'Three hamburgers, with plenty of **fries**, and three large Cokes,' he ordered.

Greens are good for you.

You've offered him some **refreshments**, I suppose?

baked beans	greens	preserves	spring greens
chives	grits	provisions	tapas
cold cuts	groceries	pulses	wholegrains
crudites	hash browns	rations	
French fries	oats	refreshments	
fries	pickles	seconds	

12 THE 'FOOTHILLS' GROUP

These nouns refer to places or parts of places. (Farmlands, grasslands, marshlands, moorlands, parklands, quicksands, and steppes also occur in a singular form with no determiner.)

The film was shot in the **foothills** of the Canadian Rockies.

But further west, where the **grasslands** give way to the Tanami desert, you might find the occasional herd moving south.

These **premises** are regularly patrolled by dogs.

His **quarters** were in the American VIP section of the NATO complex and had access to CNN's satellite service.

apartments	foothills	precincts	stalls
backbenches	gardens	premises	steppes
back streets	grasslands	provinces	suburbs
backwoods	grounds	quarters	surroundings
battlements	heavens	quicksands	terraces
benches	highlands	rapids	territorial waters
bleachers	lowlands	reaches	tropics
chambers	marshlands	regions	uplands
colonies	moorlands	sands	wastes
downs	mudflats	shallows	waters
environs	outskirts	shores	wilds
farmlands	parklands	snows	wings

13 THE 'BUSINESS HOURS' GROUP

These nouns refer to periods of time.

Their offices are open Monday through Friday during regular **business hours**.

Did you think your **schooldays** were the best time of your life while they were happening?

business hours	office hours	schooldays	times 9,15
holidays 3	opening hours	small hours	
hols	opening times	teens	

14 THE 'RICHES' GROUP

These nouns refer to money or possessions. (Finances, profits, and revenues also occur in a singular form with no determiner.)

Their **belongings** have been recovered and flown back to Britain and the men's families have been informed.

The investment **earnings** are not taxed until the **funds** are actually distributed.

What does America's richest man do when he is not amassing more **riches**?

aims	funds	readies	spoils
assets	ill-gotten gains	receipts	takings
belongings	means	revenues	things
capital gains	monies	riches	winings
damages	pickings	royalties	
earnings	proceeds	savings	
finances	profits	securities	

15 THE 'COSTS' GROUP

These nouns refer to costs or payments. (Borrowings, expenses 1, and reparations also occur in a singular form with no determiner.)

Overall operating **costs** are being reduced by further productivity.

Worries over rent, rates and other **outgoings** have constrained business occupiers.

borrowings	expenses	rates	subs
costs	outgoings	reparations	
death duties	overheads	running costs	

16 THE 'CONGRATULATIONS' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that are said or written. (Pleadings, promptings, recriminations, and vituperations also occur in a singular form with no determiner.)

So **congratulations** are due to Michael Heseltine and the director-general of the industry's watchdog, Ofwat.

Their philosophical **ramblings** take place within earshot of the waitress.

Her **words** deserve careful interpretation.

acknowledgements	congratulations	pleadings	thanks
advances	directions	promptings	tidings
apologies 2	instructions	ramblings	vituperations
blandishments	memoirs	ravings	vocals
commiserations	murmurings	recriminations	words 2,3
compliments 4	noises	regards	writings
condolences	pieties	sophistries	
confessions 5	plaudits	sweet nothings	

17 THE 'THOUGHTS' GROUP

These nouns refer to thoughts and beliefs. (Meditations and reflections also occur in a singular form with no determiner.)

His **reflections** on our multicultural society are contained in his new book called 'The Disuniting of America'.

Our **thoughts** are with him and his family.

This old system and these old **values** have given America a stability that the rest of the world would be wise to admire.

beliefs	meditations	second thoughts	values
ethics	morals	standards	
imaginings	reflections	thoughts 3,4	

18 THE 'BREAKABLES' GROUP

These nouns refer to things with a particular quality, or things of a particular type.

Wrap up **breakables** individually in newspaper and place them in packing cases, heaviest items first.

All the **electronics** are housed in a waterproof box.

There are just too many **intangibles**, too many hidden habits that might affect the player's performance.

basics 2	exotica	nasties	valuables
breakables	externals	necessaries	
electronics	intangibles	non-essentials	
essentials	invisibles	sundries	

19 THE 'BASICS' GROUP

These nouns refer to basic or detailed parts or aspects of something such as a subject, system, or situation.

If the **basics** are taught correctly, the learning is quick and easy because everything about the subject is fascinating.

The Government is not prejudging this issue, we're just wrestling with the legal **complexities** that are involved.

It was now necessary to get down to **specifics**.

basics 1	fundamentals	minutiae	subtleties
complexities	intricacies	rudiments	technicalities
essentials	mechanics	specifics	workings

20 THE 'REMAINS' GROUP

These nouns refer to what remains of something that has been almost destroyed or consumed, or to parts of something that have been removed.

Later, her **ashes** were scattered in a wood where she always walked her dog.

Do make sure **leftovers** are thoroughly reheated.

Doctors in Bombay have discovered that boiled potato **peelings** make cheap and painless dressings for burns.

Just beyond the roofs eastwards are the **remains** of one of the grandest castles in England.

ashes	lees	remains	scraps
cinders	leftovers	ruins	trimmings
dregs	peelings	scrapings	

21 THE 'ARTS' GROUP

These nouns refer to fields of study or art. (*Fine arts* also occurs in a singular form with no determiner.)

Henry, 21, was just one of three students studying **Fine Arts** at the college.

Courses which will lead to a degree that is valued in the workforce are gaining numbers while the **humanities** are losing out.

Media **studies** are now part of the State education curriculum.

arts	humanities	studies
current affairs	modern languages	
fine arts	performing arts	

22 THE 'BLOCK CAPITALS' GROUP

These nouns refer to forms of writing.

Please write in **block capitals**.

block capitals	hieroglyphics
block letters	italics

23 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a very large number of other nouns of this type. Here are some examples.

He sings, dances, acts, does **acrobatics**.

A stock of **arms** was found at his home.

Most of the tomb's **contents** were removed long ago.

My **feelings** have never changed from the day I arrived in Manchester.

It should be said that there was no evidence that he was ever involved in these **machinations** or even knew they were occurring.

His **manners** were exquisite but his tongue was malicious.

Despite qualifying for Europe last season, their **prospects** are uncertain.

But the best part was the roof terrace overlooking the **splendours** of Rome.

Her recent **travels** have taken her to Norway and Denmark.

Perhaps it was just as well that my **wits** were too slow for anything but a straight answer to the question.

A number of nouns which refer to people or things of a particular type are always used with the determiner *the*, for example *the rich* and *the impossible*: see Section 14, especially meaning groups 1, 2, and 3.

7 Collective nouns

Collective nouns are nouns which refer to groups of people or things. They can have either a singular or plural verb. There are four types of collective noun:

- 1 Collective count nouns
- 2 Collective singular nouns
- 3 Collective uncount nouns
- 4 Collective proper nouns

1 Collective count nouns

Some collective nouns are count nouns, that is, they have both singular and plural forms

like any count noun. The only thing that distinguishes them from ordinary count nouns is the fact that when they are used in the singular their verb may be either singular or plural. When they are used in the plural, of course, their verb is always plural.

These nouns are labelled **N-COUNT-COLL** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

In places such as Washington and Brussels a fast-growing **army** of business lobbyists is working for tougher laws.

As far as his **army** of fans around the world are concerned, his music is as fresh as ever.

Television splits people up but in the theatre the **audience** is there with the actors and people come together for an event.

The **audience** are instructed to put their chairs in a large circle with access for the actors at each corner.

No matter what the result of the election, the **committee** is convinced the reforms will go ahead.

The WRU general **committee** are due to sit down for three days later this month to examine their own structure.

When we stop, a few people timidly begin to gather around us, then the **crowd** begins to grow. Outside, the gates have opened and the **crowd** are piling in.

In my view, the Australian **electorate** believes utterly in the art of political argument.

Now back to the economy, how discouraged did the **electorate** seem to be about the economy?

In many cases going out for a meal is one of very few occasions when the whole **family** does sit down together to eat.

The Beaton **family** are planning on a trip to Guyana next month.

It's our duty to make sure that the next **government** does not duck the decisions it must take if Britain is to be a success again.

The **government** are to carry out a review of the Shops Act in the autumn.

Gradually, the **middle class** has swollen and this city has become a sophisticated, independent and prosperous community.

The black **middle class** feel culturally excluded while the poor are totally alienated.

It can sometimes take many years before the medical **profession** is prepared to accept new methods of diagnosing and treating illnesses.

The medical **profession** know more about female fertility than male fertility.

Our teaching **staff** is highly-skilled in teaching the latest American business terminology, practices and etiquette.

The **staff** accuse him of running the paper in an over-ambitious and authoritarian manner.

Yesterday, the jury decided the **trio** was guilty of attempted murder, robbery and firearms charges.

The **trio** were temporarily barred from playing by the league for unruly behaviour at a training camp.

aircrew	congress	fire department	jury
aristocracy	consortium	fire service	lower class
army	cortege	flock	mafia
audience	coterie	flora	middle class
band	council	foursome	military
brigade	couple	front bench	multitude
cabin crew	coven	gaggle	opposition
cast	crew 1	garrison	panel
chapter 3	crowd	government	people
command 5,6	diplomatic corps	ground crew	press corps
commission	electorate	ground staff	profession
committee	family	group	quartet
community	fauna	hierarchy	school
company	field 8	high command	school board
congregation	fire brigade	junta	squadron

staff
studio audience
subcommittee
swarm
team

technocracy
think-tank
town council
treasury
tribe

tribunal
trio
troop
troupe
upper class

working class
working group
working party

2 Collective singular nouns

Some collective nouns are singular nouns, that is, they are used with a determiner and have no plural form. Like collective count nouns, they can be used with either a singular or plural verb (when they are the Subject of a verb).

These nouns are labelled **N-SING-COLL** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

For the first time since the 1930s, the Peruvian **bourgeoisie** has no opposition and has its own government.

In Wright's formulation, among the four groups engaged in large-scale capitalist economic activities, the **bourgeoisie** are at the very top.

She remarks that of late her **clientele** has included several art students from Munich's university.

The **clientele** were mainly postmen, building workers and city messengers.

The **enemy** lurks just across the cornfield and over the misty-blue rise of mountains.

The **enemy** crawl silently through their tunnels.

The **headquarters** is in the sea-front district of Colombo, where most of the city's luxury hotels are located.

The police **headquarters** are now on fire after the demonstrators lit vehicles near the building.

The **media** is very often highly resistant to innovation and radicalism.

The **media** are not interested in the facts. They are obsessed with the figures.

The **police** is being reorganised along Western lines.

The **police** were called at 9.33 and arrived some 15 minutes later.

One thing both advertisers and politicians know too well is that the **public** becomes wise to their tactics remarkably fast.

The general **public** give an average of just 50p per year in voluntary donations to mental health charities.

His present **whereabouts** is not known.

Their current **whereabouts** are unknown.

above	floor 5	media	praetorian guard
array	general public	military police	press
artillery	guard	ministry	proletariat
bench 4	handful	minority	prosecution
bourgeoisie	headquarters	nobility	public
citizenry	intelligentsia	old guard	right
clientele	judiciary	opposition	riot police
community	laity	peasantry	silent majority
crew 4	left	petit bourgeoisie	triumvirate
defence	majority	plethora	upper crust
enemy	mass media	police	whereabouts

3 Collective uncount nouns

Some collective nouns are uncount nouns, that is, they are typically used without determiners or with quantifiers like *all* or *some*, and they have no plural form.

These nouns are labelled **N-UNCOUNT-COLL** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

Graffiti is generally unattractive and costly to remove.

The Brew Crew's **graffiti** still deface walls and the air is pervaded by a smell of damp decay.

Another problem is the increasing distance which **livestock** is forced to travel to EC-approved abattoirs.

The report confirms **livestock** are frequently forced to travel more than 40 hours to their final destinations in breach of British law.

The key to success, reckons Mr Anderson, will be keeping distribution costs low: **logistics** is now more important in our industry than technology.

Although the benefits are apparent, the **logistics** of developing the system are fiendishly complex.

air traffic control	diamonds 4	livestock	trumps 1
algae	graffiti	logistics	
cavalry	hearts 9	prey	
clubs 8	infantry	spades 2	

4 Collective proper nouns

Some collective nouns are proper nouns. These nouns are labelled N-PROPER-COLL in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

Next week the **Commons** is to debate Britain finally joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism.

The **Commons** are expected to approve in principle what has been one of the most contentious of the government's proposed laws.

The **Olympic Games** seems so far away, so when they see a gold medalist, it's a real incentive for them.

In 1896, the modern **Olympic Games** were revived by Pierre de Coubertin.

8 Proper nouns

Proper nouns are nouns that refer to a particular person, place, institution, time, or thing. Many proper nouns are used without a determiner, e.g. *Hell, Asia, Father Christmas*. Others are always preceded by *the*, e.g. *the BBC, the Church of England*. Proper nouns begin with a capital letter.

These nouns are labelled N-PROPER in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

It is only 14 months since **Australia** beat **England** 4-0, but the two sides are well-matched.

The **BBC's** licence fee is to be set below the rate of inflation.

The **Church of England** decided yesterday to move into full communion with the Lutheran state churches of **Scandinavia** and the **Baltic**.

The outer surface of the **Earth** consists of about two dozen interlocking plates which slowly grind against each other.

Remnants of the ice cap that once blanketed the entire country during the **Ice Age** can be seen in the distance.

I am convinced in five years personal medical information will be available on the **Internet**.

The fact is that **Oxbridge** simply wants to recruit the 'best' students, from whatever background.

How he finally reached the **South Pole** is a mystery that will be revealed in the fullness of time.

Note that many nouns referring to family members, such as *Mum* and *Dad*, can be proper

nouns (used without a determiner) when someone refers to their own relative.

When it was time to mow the yard, **Grandpa** always enjoyed doing it himself.

Mummy bought it for me in the market at Fuengirola.

9 Nouns used in names

Some nouns are always or often used as part of a name. When used like this, they begin with a capital letter.

These nouns are labelled N-IN-NAMES or oft in names in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

There are three patterns, of which the first is the most frequent.

Pattern 1

	adjective/noun/possessive	Noun
the	Bournemouth	Echo
the	Royal	Exchange
	Niagara	Falls
	Poole	Harbour
	St Richard's	Hospice

Pattern 2

	Noun	of	noun
the	Cape	of	Good Hope
the Royal	College	of	Physicians
the	League	of	Nations

Pattern 3

	Noun	adjective/noun
	Cape	Horn
the	Massif	Central
	Piazza	Armerina

Nouns with these patterns belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'HOUSE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ORGANIZATION' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CHURCH' GROUP
- 4 THE 'SCHOOL' GROUP
- 5 THE 'REPUBLIC' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ROAD' GROUP

- 7 THE 'OVERTURE' GROUP
 8 THE 'NEWS' GROUP
 9 THE 'DESERT' GROUP
 10 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'HOUSE' GROUP

These nouns are used as part of the names of buildings, building complexes, or man-made structures. They all have Pattern 1. *Castle, Gallery, Museum, Palace, and Tower* also have Pattern 2, and *Castle* and *Fort* also have Pattern 3.

The Princess of Wales arrived at **Heathrow Airport**, London, this evening from the United States of America.

BBC Good Food is staging the first ever celebration of great cooking at The **National Exhibition Centre** in Birmingham.

He was jailed for six years at **Maidstone Crown Court** for 20 offences, including armed robberies.

The West Highlands Line proper runs between Glasgow and **Fort William**, with two trains daily.

Albert Patrick bought **Edgbaston Garage Ltd.** at Selly Oak and his son ran the garage for him.

Basic funding for **Alpha House** comes from local and central government but the rest has to be raised charitably.

They stayed at the **Cypress Inn**, a simple motel next to a shopping centre.

Hospital patients were still treated here, instead of being referred 15 miles away to the new hi-tec place in **Redwood New Town**.

In the Great Stink of 1858, the smell at the **Palace of Westminster** was so unbearable that its windows had to be draped with curtains soaked in lime solution.

He had been given 24-hour compassionate leave from the **Maze Prison**, where he is serving a 14-year sentence.

The **Gate Theatre** is about to open the British premiere of *Democracy* by Joseph Brodsky.

Aerodrome	Exchange 6	Infirmery	Police Station
Airport	Farm	Inn	Priory
Barracks	Forge	Leisure Centre	Prison
Bowl 11	Fort	Manor	Stadium
Bridge	Gallery	Mansions	Tavern
Castle	Garage	Museum	Tea Room
Centre	Hall	National Park	Tea Shop
Club	Harbour	New Town	Theatre
Cottage	Hospice	Opera House	Tower
Crown Court	Hospital	Palace	Trading Estate
Estate	House	Pier	

2 THE 'ORGANIZATION' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of organizations and institutions. All of them except *Friends* have Pattern 1. The following nouns also have Pattern 2: *Association, College, Confederation, Corporation, Council 3, Federation, Guild, Institute, League, Legion, Office, Orchestra, Organization, Society, and Union*. *Friends* has only Pattern 2.

The **National Association of Head Teachers** will tell the Government today that its members will co-operate with national testing of seven-year-olds.

His clients have included **National Westminster Bank** and the **Corporation of London**.

On Monday, the **Royal College of Physicians** is due to publish a report on how decisions on rationing health care should be made.

The **Strategic Air Command** has kept one plane in the air at all times for the last twenty nine years.

The **Glass and Glazing Federation** has produced a simple guide that includes tips on heating and safety.

She made a donation to **Friends of the Earth** for me.

The group has circulated material to the **Writers' Guild**, scriptwriters and producers at the BBC, and production companies.

The **Foreign Office** has issued new advice that Britons in most parts of Croatia should leave the country unless they had a pressing reason to stay.

Last year, the **World Health Organization** classified ME as an organic (i.e. physical) disorder of the brain.

In 1990 the **Florence Trust**, which provides studio space for artists, moved in.

Academy	Command 6	Front 12	Organization
Airline	Company	Guards 8	Philharmonic
Airways	Confederation	Guild	Service 2
Association	Corporation	Institute	Society
Authority 2	Corps	Institution	Students' Union
Bank	Council	League	Symphony Orchestra
Bureau	County Council	Legion	Town Council
Club	Federation	Office 2	Trust 10
College	Friends 3	Orchestra	Union

3 THE 'CHURCH' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of religious buildings and institutions. They have Patterns 1 and 2. The exception is *Synagogue* which only has Pattern 1.

The **Church of England** must take urgent action to end discrimination against its lesbian and gay members.

British mosques tend to be built slowly: the **Central Mosque** in Birmingham took from 1962 to 1975.

One of Jesus's most dramatic acts was to cast out the money changers from the **Temple of Jerusalem**.

Church	Oratory	Tabernacle
Mosque	Synagogue	Temple

4 THE 'SCHOOL' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of schools and other educational bodies. They have Pattern 1. The following nouns also have Pattern 2: *Academy, College 1, Conservatory, Polytechnic, School 4, and University*.

It's his parents' choice to send him to a boarding school, rather than a convenient day school such as **Holland Park Comprehensive**.

He later became Director of the **Leningrad Conservatory of Music**.

At **Glebe Junior School** in Rayleigh, Essex, the class of 10- and 11-year-olds was doing a project on safety in the home.

Ex-boxer Terry Marsh has enrolled as a mature student at the **City of London Polytechnic**.

She received her medical degree at the **School of Medicine** of the **University of California**, San Francisco.

Academy	Grammar School	Polytechnic
College	High School	Primary School
Comprehensive	Junior School	School
Conservatoire	Middle School	Technical College
Conservatory 2	Poly	University

5 THE 'REPUBLIC' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of national governments. They all have Patterns 1 and 2.

One reason for the colonies joining together as the Commonwealth of Australia was to have a national immigration policy.

He was jailed for six years in Dublin for attempting to smuggle arms and ammunition into the Irish Republic.

Commonwealth 2	Kingdom	Sultanate
Emirate	Republic	

6 THE 'ROAD' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of roads or town squares. They all have Pattern 1, except Route, which has Pattern 3 and is followed by a number. Piazza has Pattern 3 when referring to a square in Italy; Avenue and Boulevard have Pattern 3 when referring to roads in France.

She lived in a large apartment in the Pierre Hotel on Fifth Avenue, overlooking Central Park. Local residents said they were woken at about 1 a.m. by shots in Quinney Crescent and neighbouring Rosegate Close.

Dinner is at the Gloucester Hotel, Harrington Gardens, London.

You emerge opposite Waugh's first rooms in New College Lane and turning right through Catte Street into the Broad, you will pass Blackwell's.

In the end we found what we were looking for in a charming small house in Clabon Mews, just off Cadogan Square.

I left Father Levon in the Piazza San Marco and took a boat across the lagoon to the island of San Lazzaro.

I walked down Claremont Road to watch City play their way out of the Second Division.

Then, as she rounded the lake again she suddenly swung off on to Route 98 into the Tahoe National Forest.

Avenue	Drive 18	Lane	Row
Boulevard	Gardens 4	Mews	Square
Bypass	Gate 3	Parade 13	Street
Circus 3	Green 8	Piazza	Terrace
Close	Grove 2	Place	Way 19
Court 5	High Street	Road	
Crescent	junction	Route 3	

7 THE 'OVERTURE' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of musical compositions. They all have Pattern 1, and are often preceded by an ordinal, e.g. Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony. Sometimes they are followed by numbers, e.g. Prokofiev's Symphony No 6, or by a specific key, e.g. Stravinsky's Symphony in C, or by another prepositional phrase, e.g. Balanchine's Symphony in Three Movements.

Weber's imaginative and colourful harmonies came vividly alive in a sparkling performance of the Oberon Overture.

His fabulous recording of Elgar's Organ Sonata is still the model for us all.

Overture	Rhapsody	Symphony
Polka	Serenade	Toccata
Requiem	Sonata	Waltz

8 THE 'NEWS' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of newspapers and magazines. They all have Pattern 1.

The job Mr Rudd took up in January this year was advertised in the Queensland Government Gazette on July 29.

Last year, The Guardian and Manchester Evening News bought a controlling interest in Broadcast Communications.

SAS presence in Thailand was confirmed by Jane's Defence Weekly, which Whitehall regards as authoritative.

Advertiser	Gazette	News	Weekly
Chronicle	Inquirer	Standard	
Echo	Monthly	Times	

9 THE 'DESERT' GROUP

These nouns are used in the names of geographical features or areas. They all have Pattern 1. The following nouns also have Pattern 2: Bay, Cape, Glen, Island, Isle, Isthmus, Mount, Sea, Strait, Vale, and Valley. The following nouns also have Pattern 3: Cape, Glen, Lake, Loch, Massif, and Mount. River usually has Pattern 3 in British English (e.g. the River Thames), and Pattern 1 in American English (e.g. the Colorado River).

In Brazil, the eastern Amazon Basin has been unusually dry for the past four months.

He lived then in a small cottage on the side of Wimbledon Common.

The disappearance of Arafat's plane in the Sahara Desert created speculation across the world about who would lead the PLO if he died.

Here one can look up to the top of Richmond Hill, which is reached towards the end of this walk.

He said he wanted to spend more time with his wife and three children at their home on the Isle of Man.

He will be based at a luxury hotel on the shores of the beautiful Loch Lomond.

The Italian police say the lava from Mount Etna has engulfed a house a few hundred yards from the village on the eastern slope of the mountain.

Another alternative might be a cruise through the Rhine Valley in Germany, or a walking holiday in the French Alps.

Basin 3,4	Embankment	Island	Pass 24
Bay	Estuary	Isle	Peninsula
Canyon	Falls 18	Isthmus	River
Cape	Fault 5	Lake	Sea
Common 8	Fjord	Loch	Strait
Cove	Glen	Massif	Tarn
Desert	Gulch	Mount	Vale
Downs	Hill	Ocean	Valley

10 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have these patterns. *Cup*, *Line*, *Memorial*, *Nebula*, *Regatta*, *Syndrome*, and *Trophy* have Pattern 1; *Gospel* and *Tale* have Patterns 1 and 2; *Channel* has Patterns 1 and 3; *HMS*, *Hurricane*, and *Typhoon* have Pattern 3.

Yesterday the Type 42 destroyer **HMS Cardiff** put to sea further south in the Gulf.

The Sun probably formed with thousands of other stars from a cloud of gas and dust like the Orion **Nebula**.

There were three British winners at Lucerne **Regatta** yesterday.

The first 20 readers selected will also receive a hardback copy of The **Tale** of Peter Rabbit.

Typhoon Kent raged across southern China, killing at least 47 people.

Channel 1	Hurricane	Regatta	Typhoon
Cup 4	Line 11,14	Syndrome	
Gospel	Memorial	Tale	
HMS	Nebula	Trophy	

10 Titles

Some nouns are titles, that is, they indicate a person's place in a profession or family, or in society. They are used before someone's name, and begin with a capital letter.

These nouns are labelled N-TITLE in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

Nouns of this type belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'AUNT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BARON' GROUP
- 3 THE 'MS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ADMIRAL' GROUP
- 5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'AUNT' GROUP

These nouns indicate the relationship of a person to the speaker.

Well, **Aunt Joan** will be here for Christmas Day.

Aunt	Auntie	Uncle
------	--------	-------

2 THE 'BARON' GROUP

These nouns indicate that someone has a high rank in society which they have inherited or which has been given to them.

On succeeding as second **Baron Grantchester** after his father's death in 1976 he became a cross-bencher.

Princess Caroline married Mr Casiraghi in 1983, a year after her mother, **Princess Grace**, was killed in a car crash.

Emperor and Empress are sometimes preceded by the.

The fate of Nicholas II, the **Empress Alexandra** and their five children was treated with enormous reverence.

Baron	Czar	Lord	Tsar
Baroness	Czarina	Prince	Tsarina
Caliph	Dame	Princess	Viscount
Count	Emperor	Queen	Viscountess
Countess	Empress	Sheikh	
Crown Prince	King	Sir	
Crown Princess	Lady	Sultan	

3 THE 'MS' GROUP

These nouns are titles given to ordinary people.

A victory for **Ms Dixon** would make her the first black woman mayor of a large US city.

Messrs is plural.

Since they teamed up in 1993, **Messrs Treger and Myerson** have focused on companies where they think shareholder value can be increased.

Esquire is used after a man's name, not before it. It is usually abbreviated to Esq.

The note shall be made in a form satisfactory to us and supplied to you by our attorney, **Harold T. Cranford, Esq.**

Esquire (Esq.)	Miss 1	Ms
Master 13	Mr	
Messrs	Mrs	

4 THE 'ADMIRAL' GROUP

These nouns are the titles used in the armed forces, the church, and politics, and in other jobs and professions, such as nursing and academia. Abbreviations are given in brackets.

Nobel Peace Prize winner, **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**, said that he will always remember Mr Tambo for his lack of bitterness and total commitment.

The fourth member of the group, **Brigadier Teddy Tryon-Wilson**, was senior administrative officer of one of the units involved in the repatriations.

I consulted **Doctor Theodore Dalrymple**, well known to Spectator readers for his regular medical reports from one of Her Majesty's prisons.

Mr Duke's Democrat opponent, **Senator Bennett Johnston**, had won at least 53 per cent of the vote with 98 per cent of the ballots counted.

WPC Wright, who had a university degree and high hopes of a successful career in the police, had been tricked by an uneducated old woman three times her age.

Admiral	Chief Constable	Detective
Alderman	Chief Justice	Doctor 1,3 (Dr.)
Archbishop	Colonel (Col.)	Ensign
Archdeacon	Commandant	Father 4 (Fr.)
Assemblyman	Commander (Cdr.)	Field Marshal
Assemblywoman	Commander-in-chief	Flight Lieutenant (Ft. Lt.)
Ayatollah	Commodore (Cdre.)	General (Gen.)
Bishop	Congressman	Generalissimo
Brigadier (Brig.)	Congresswoman	Governor (Gov.)
Brigadier General (Brig. Gen.)	Constable	Inspector (Insp.)
Brother 3	Consul	Judge
Captain (Capt.)	Corporal (Cpl.)	Justice
Cardinal	Councillor (Cllr.)	Lieutenant (Lt./Lieut.)
Chancellor	Councilman	Major (Maj.)
Chief 2	Councilwoman	Major General (Maj. Gen.)

Marshal	Prior	Sheriff
Matron	Prioress	Sister 2,3
Metropolitan	Private (Pte.)	Solicitor General
Monsignor (Mgr./Msgr.)	Professor (Prof.)	Squadron Leader
Mullah	Rabbi	Squire
Nurse	Rear Admiral	Staff Sergeant
Patriarch	Recorder 3	Superintendent (Supt.)
Petty Officer	Representative (Rep.)	Trooper
Pilot Officer	Reverend (Rev./Revd.)	Wing Commander
Police Constable (PC)	Secretary 4	Woman Police
Pope	Senator	Constable (WPC)
President	Sergeant (Sgt.)	
Prime Minister	Sergeant Major (Sgt. Maj.)	

5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns of this type.

Newspapers have accused him of having a string of affairs, including one with a former Miss America.

Some of the Czar's family are said to be buried there, and the graves are marked with the Cross of Saint Andrew.

Archangel	Guru	Saint (St.)
Comrade 2	Miss 4	

11 Vocative nouns

Vocative nouns, or vocatives, are used to address people. Most of them are used with no determiner. Most of them are always or usually used in the singular; a few are only used in the plural.

These nouns are labelled **N-VOC** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

Nouns of this type belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'LOVE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'SIR' GROUP
- 3 THE 'MUM' AND 'DAD' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CAPTAIN' GROUP
- 5 THE 'CHAIRMAN' GROUP
- 6 THE 'MAJESTY' GROUP
- 7 THE 'LADY' GROUP

1 THE 'LOVE' GROUP

These nouns are used to address someone in an affectionate or informal way. *Boss, doc, gaffer, guv, guvnor, padre, prof, sarge, and skipper* are used to address someone with a particular job or rank informally. *Boy 5* is used when addressing a dog, and *puss* is used when addressing a cat.

Hey, doc, when are you going to get me out of here?

Sorry, folks, can't be done.

We'll miss you, lad.

Don't worry, love.

Some vocative nouns showing affection are sometimes used with the determiner *my*. They are marked with * in the list below.

Off you go, my darlings.

My dear, you have a very difficult time ahead.

babe 1	gaffer	love*	sarge
baby 4	gal*	luv	skipper
boss	gents	man 10,11	son 3
boy 1,4,5*	girl*	mate 2	sonny
bud	guv	matey	squire
buddy	guvnor	Miss 3	sucker
chum	guys	missus	sugar
darling*	honey	mister	sweet*
dear*	kid 2	Paddy	sweetheart*
dearest*	lad*	padre	sweetie*
dearie	laddie*	pal	woman 7
doc	lady 7	pet*	
duck 9*	lass*	prof	
folks 3	lassie*	puss	

2 THE 'SIR' GROUP

These nouns are used to address someone in a polite way.

Ladies and gentlemen, owing to the indisposition of one of our actors, tonight's performance of The Messiah has been cancelled.

Yes, sir, what can we do for you?

gentlemen	ma'am	maestro	Miss 2
ladies	madam	master	sir

Two nouns are used to show respect when addressing God.

Lord, we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Father	Lord
--------	------

3 THE 'MUM' AND 'DAD' GROUP

These nouns are used to address a relative. Some are formal and some are informal. They are often spelled with a capital letter.

I'll be there in a minute, Dad.

Oh, Grandma, that's so sweet.

Don't go on, Mum.

aunt	grandfather	mama	mummy
auntie	grandma	mamma	nan
dad	grandmother	mammy	pa
daddy	grandpa	mom	papa
father	granny	momma	pop
gran	kids 1	mommy	uncle
grandad	ma	mother	
grandaddy	mam	mum	

4 THE 'CAPTAIN' GROUP

These nouns are used to address someone with a particular job or rank in a fairly formal way. They are often spelled with a capital letter.

You can tell your men to prepare to move out, **Captain**.

I've no idea, **Inspector**.

I've been sick again, **nurse**.

bishop	count	lieutenant	sergeant
brother 3	countess	major	sergeant major
captain	detective	minister	sister 2,3
colonel	doctor	nurse	vicar
commander	father 4	officer	
comrade 2	general	prime minister	
constable	inspector	professor	

5 THE 'CHAIRMAN' GROUP

These nouns are used to address someone with a particular job or role in a formal way. They are preceded by *Mr* (for a man) or *Madam* (for a woman).

I look forward, *Mr* **Chairman**, to this evening's discussion.

Your ruling, *Madam* **Speaker**, will have historic importance and will be studied over many centuries.

Chairman	President	Speaker 3
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6 THE 'MAJESTY' GROUP

These nouns are used to address an important person formally. They are used with the determiner *your*. (See also Section 15, meaning group 63.)

Your **Highness**, the law is very clear regarding threats to the Empire.

I quite agree, *Your* **Majesty**.

Eminence	Highness	Ladyship	Royal Highness
Excellency	Holiness	Lordship	
Grace	Honour	Majesty	

7 THE 'LADY' GROUP

These nouns are used to address someone of high rank. They are used with the determiner *my*.

Of course I will, *my* **lady**.

lady 4	lord
--------	------

Other vocatives

Titles followed by a person's name are often used to address people: see Section 10.

I love you, **Aunt Molly**.

Now, **Sergeant Peacock**, I don't want to seem rude but I have a train to catch.

Names of people are also used as vocatives.

What did you do, **Alison**?

Thank you, **John**.

12 Nouns used as modifiers

Many nouns are often used to modify another noun – that is, used before the other noun. These nouns are labelled **N n** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

	Noun	noun
an	afternoon	meeting
	cotton	socks
a	riverside	pub

Nouns used as modifiers include the following:

- 1 MATERIALS
- 2 FOOD AND DRINK
- 3 PLACES
- 4 TIMES
- 5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 MATERIALS

These nouns indicate what something is made of.

Residents were woken by loud explosions as flames shot through the **asbestos** roof.

These parrots are put into **cardboard** boxes, often so small that the parrot cannot stretch his wings.

Empty **clay** huts, some of them burnt out, clung to the mountain slopes.

He is wearing jeans and trainers and a **denim** shirt over a white T-shirt.

The Horseman was buried in his **fur** coat and high **leather** boots, next to his horse.

This practical back brush is filled with soft but hard wearing **nylon** bristles, which will last for years.

A boat made of more than 12,000 empty **plastic** water bottles is to cross the Channel.

Very soft, very warm, these **sheepskin** mittens from Uruguay would make a lovely present.

Loose-fitting black **silk** shirts and sharp trousers are my favourite leisurewear.

You will find women selling some of their own antique artefacts, such as **silver** jewellery, embroidery and small carpets.

2 FOOD AND DRINK

These nouns indicate the ingredients or flavour of an item of food or drink.

This sauce is wonderful with an **apple** tart, or just with **vanilla** ice-cream.

The sweet lemon-scented leaves make a delicious **herb** tea.

Plenty of fruit, vegetables, **wheat** cereals, puffed wheat, **wheat** biscuits, rolled oats, **wholemeal** bread, pasta, or **soya** extracts are all beneficial.

3 PLACES

These nouns indicate the place that something happens.

The book is an enjoyable way of comparing **city** life to life in the African outback.

We go through some amazing country and camp each night at a different **country** pub and enjoy a few beers and a good dinner.

A boy of three was recovering yesterday after being hurled from a **fairground** ride.

From the windows of our **hilltop** house, I often marvel at the amazing growth of greenery.

Welsh police were told to search every **mountain** resort and hotel for Calton's distinctive Daihatsu four-wheel drive car.

Can you imagine living in this magnificent **penthouse** flat in Highgate?

Follow the **riverside** path along the left bank of the Teviot past the ruins of a medieval castle and up the river towards Sunlaws House.

The conditions in the church and **school** buildings where they were housed were overcrowded and insanitary.

Gathering shells on a **seaside** holiday is an almost irresistible pastime.

The 300 inhabitants will be celebrating with a dance in the **village** hall.

4 TIMES

These nouns indicate the period of time when something happens.

They want to be in Devon because they spent **childhood** holidays there.

And there will certainly be a delicious dessert wine to finish off an **evening** meal.

Birmingham New Street rail station was closed in the **morning** rush hour after a fire on board a locomotive spread into a roof duct over four platforms.

If you've got a **summer** holiday booked, you're probably starting to long for the departure date.

The couple's eldest child Alison, 14, had missed the family's regular **Sunday** walk so that she could visit friends.

5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There is a very large number of other nouns which are typically used as modifiers. Here are some examples:

Denfeld herself is also a talented **amateur** boxer, competing in a sport which now has almost 300 registered female participants in the United States.

Inside was a lion cub in a cage, a **baby** elephant, which stood swaying gently from side to side, and three leopards.

She was arrested in Bangkok, Thailand, after **customs** officers found 6.2 kg (13.5 lb) of heroin in her luggage.

A Supreme Court judge found the doctor had been medically negligent in not ordering **follow-up** tests.

He was sent to prison for four years for making a **hoax** call to police about a bomb at Victoria station.

Critical illness insurance pays out a lump sum if you are diagnosed with an illness from a list drawn up by the **insurance** company.

The undeniable fact is that shopping is now the number one **leisure** activity in Australia.

He took a special delight in children, telling them stories and performing **magic** tricks.

The five **opposition** parties that participated in the election are expected to get no more than two seats in the 150-member chamber.

The team had examined **radio** waves from 200 stars for evidence of alien life, but none was found.

He needed two **removal** vans for his luggage – mostly the 8000 volumes of his library.

The area known as Freak Street has become something of a **tourist** attraction in its own right.

A 67-year-old **trainee** pilot damaged his shoulder but escaped serious injury when his motorised hang glider crashed on landing on South Stradbroke Island yesterday.

An **umbrella** organisation for all gay groups is being established.

Surrey University is to consider charging top-up tuition fees for some of its **undergraduate** courses.

Note that some plural nouns are used in a singular form when used to modify another noun.

Ms. Garratt was forced to start bankruptcy-law proceedings because Jerell began withholding her **royalty** payments last month.

In a bizarre coincidence, singing twins Paul and Barry Ryan entered hospital simultaneously for **tonsil** operations.

He stuffed Sam's letter into his **trouser** pocket.

13 a N

The noun is preceded by the indefinite article a (or an).

a	Noun
a	dream
a	godsend
a	help

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'BORE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'INSPIRATION' GROUP
- 3 THE 'LAUGH' GROUP
- 4 THE 'BREEZE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'QUANDARY' GROUP
- 6 THE 'TALKING-TO' GROUP
- 7 THE 'CHAT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'SPRINT' GROUP
- 9 THE 'DOZE' GROUP
- 10 THE 'CLEAN' GROUP
- 11 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'BORE' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is unpleasant, boring, or difficult. Some nouns, such as bore and drag, may also refer to people.

He finds night calls a **bore** and would happily get rid of them altogether.

It was an excellent holiday, but Philip is really a bit of a **drag** after a while.

The police investigation was a **joke**. A total cover-up.

Without collaboration, and perhaps without public money as well, the super-jumbo may never be built – which would be a **pity**.

I went to the Clothing Export Council and eventually got financial backing, but it was a **slog**.

bastard 4	come-down	fiddle 6	slog 2
bind 7	crime 2	grind 6	strain 4
bitch 2	disgrace	joke 5	struggle 8
bore 4	downer 2	nuisance	yawn 2
bugger 2	drag 9	pity	
bummer	embarrassment 3	shame	

2 THE 'INSPIRATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to something or someone that is good, pleasant, or exciting.

Thanks to you for making the weekend such a spectacular success. It was a gas.

He described her as 'a very great Australian' who had served as 'a model and an inspiration to her countrymen and women'.

brick 2	godsend	mercy 3	winner 2
dream 7	inspiration 2	revelation 3	
gas 7	knockout 4	sensation 5	

3 THE 'LAUGH' GROUP

These nouns refer to something or someone that is funny or amusing.

Drink-driving used to be considered a bit of a laugh.

She's got a tremendous sense of fun. Get a few drinks inside her and she's a scream.

giggle 3	laugh 5
hoot 4	scream 4

4 THE 'BREEZE' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that are easy or cheap.

Sorbet's a breeze if you have an ice-cream maker and not that hard if you haven't.

She got all fifty-seven volumes for fifteen dollars and she said it was a steal.

breeze 4	doddle	steal 4
cinch	snip 2	

5 THE 'QUANDARY' GROUP

These nouns indicate that someone is in a difficult or undecided situation.

So I'm caught in a bind. Do I reject the feminine role and put on sensible shoes? Or do I opt for the pretty pumps that are painful but sometimes make me look and feel more attractive?

Parents can be in a quandary whether to put their twins in the same class or separate them.

bind 8	fix 21	pickle 4
double-bind	jam 8	quandary

6 THE 'TALKING-TO' GROUP

These nouns refer to verbal and physical punishment. This use is productive: other ways of talking about punishment are also sometimes used with a.

I try to reason with him but sometimes he just doesn't listen and I end up shouting at him or giving him a smack.

He was put in the back of a police car and given a talking-to.

The school has no legal powers to enforce the contract but will impose penalties ranging from a ticking-off to detention or a stern letter home if the rules are broken.

beating	pasting	rollicking	thrashing
blast 9	pounding	smack	ticking-off
dressing-down	rap 6	talking-to	
earful	roasting	telling-off	

7 THE 'CHAT' GROUP

These nouns refer to talking and telephoning.

Yeah, well, I'll tell her and she can give you a buzz and tell you whether she's coming up on Saturday or Sunday.

Every day we have a chat, and I pass on all Tilda's messages to her.

They usually stopped for a gossip on the rare occasions when they ran into each other.

buzz	chat	natter
call	gossip	ring

8 THE 'SPRINT' GROUP

These nouns refer to physical movement, although the meaning may be physical or metaphorical. We include here *standstill* and *stop*, which indicate a lack of movement.

Traffic slowed to a crawl on roads out of cities and towards coastal resorts.

The slow march back to international respectability has turned into a gallop.

Deborah first got into the drag car last year when Robert invited her to go for a spin.

As I walked to my car a panic set in. I broke into a sprint, jumped in and locked the doors.

The railways came to a virtual standstill yesterday as train drivers staged the first of six 24-hour stoppages.

crawl	run	standstill	walk
dash	spin 5,8	stop	wander
gallop	sprint	trot	

9 THE 'DOZE' GROUP

These nouns indicate that someone sleeps, usually briefly.

Halebottom woke from a doze to find himself alone in a train compartment.

The old lady allowed herself to be taken upstairs for a lie-down before their guests arrived.

catnap	kip	nap
doze	lie-down	sleep

10 THE 'CLEAN' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions of various kinds. Most of them, like *clean* and *cut*, have associated verbs.

It is good to see The Independent giving an airing to the issue of electoral reform.

Everything she had on from hat to shoe needed a good brush.

Men now pay £39 for a cut and blow dry and women £59.

I thought I'd have a quick **flick** through some recent issues to find out when was the last time that Rochdale won a point.

Now, in many constituencies, men can't get a **look-in**. Labour's selective policy of nominating only women is upsetting the agenda.

'I just came to have a **peep**,' she said, 'and everything looks wonderful.'

Second-hand office furniture stores are almost always worth a **rummage** through if you're looking for cheap and sturdy lighting or simple yet comfortable tables and chairs.

Some of my friends do the ironing when their children are asleep, but personally, I think this is a time when I'm allowed to have a **sit-down**.

'It's important to make a **stand** for taste and discrimination in a tasteless world,' she declares.

'I had a **think** about what I wanted to do but it only took me minutes to decide on athletics,' Natula said.

Calling all new students! May we have a **word** with you about your banking arrangements?

afterthought	flap 7	read	squat
airing ◇7,◇8	flick	rummage	squeeze
bathe	hand 1.6	rush 4	stand 8
brush	look	say 5	think
clap	look-in	scrub	tow 1
clean	nod	second thought	try ▷4
clip	peck	sit-down	weep
crouch	peek	smoke	word 4
cry 1	peep	snog	
cut	pull	spin 8	
effort	push	squash 3	

11 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

There was a **blite** in the air, mist clung to the ground and there was no warmth from the sun.

After a few minutes I said, 'I'm sorry, but my mind is a **blank**,' to which he replied, 'Don't worry. Just relax and wait for something to come. It will.'

She opened the front door a **crack** and peeked outside.

Give nature a helping **hand** in the cold weather by providing food and shelter for the birds in your garden.

The man was almost a **head** taller than Frank, and in the dim light of the hallway it was impossible to see his face.

Being nosy is probably a **help** in this job. I'm interested in people, you see.

He managed to ease out a cigarette far enough for him to catch it between his lips. 'I need a **light**,' he said.

Many in the business think that Red Star was already losing a **packet** in the Seventies.

In eight months of operation he has not made a **penny** and does not look like doing so in the near future.

Perhaps she does have a **point** and, if so, it deserves to be debated.

Where we come from, to see any band you like, you normally have to travel quite a **way**.

I don't understand a **word** he says when he gets over-excited.

bash 6	breather	eternity 2	gloss 3
bender	buzz 6	eye 3	glow 2
bird's eye view	crack 2	eye-opener	goldmine
bite 3,9	daze	fluke	grand 8
blank 4	edge 6	fool's paradise	hair's breadth

hand 1.4	light 1.8	number 3	time 6
head ▷1	living wage	packet 3	tribute 2
heart attack 2	lottery 2	penny 4	way 24,25
help 5	meal ticket	point 2	while 2.1
ill wind	mint 5	puzzle 4	wind-up 2
item 4	mixed bag	sine qua non	word 6
kick 6	mo	spent force	yen 2
ladies' man	mouthful 2	stink 3	
lift 6	no-no	tan 1	

14 the N

The noun is preceded by the determiner *the*.

the	Noun
the	dead
the	front
the	pentathlon
the	roadside
the	speed limit
the	sun
the	throne

Many nouns sometimes have *the* in front of them, when the thing referred to has already been mentioned. Some proper nouns are always preceded by *the*: see Section 8.

The nouns listed here are those which are always or typically preceded by *the*. Most of them are singular nouns or plural nouns.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'IMPOSSIBLE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'RICH' AND 'POOR' GROUP
- 3 THE 'ENGLISH' GROUP
- 4 THE 'PUBLIC' GROUP
- 5 THE 'GOVERNMENT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'PRESIDENT' GROUP
- 7 THE 'PRESIDENCY' GROUP
- 8 THE 'SELLER' GROUP
- 9 THE 'BUTCHER' GROUP
- 10 THE 'SEA' GROUP
- 11 THE 'OPEN AIR' GROUP
- 12 THE 'DARK' GROUP
- 13 THE 'DAYTIME' GROUP
- 14 THE 'BEGINNING' AND 'END' GROUP
- 15 THE 'SOUND BARRIER' GROUP
- 16 THE 'CRUNCH' GROUP
- 17 THE 'BASICS' GROUP
- 18 THE 'DOWNSIDE' GROUP

- 19 THE 'OPPOSITE' GROUP
- 20 THE 'OUTCOME' GROUP
- 21 THE 'EAST' GROUP
- 22 THE 'LOWLANDS' GROUP
- 23 THE 'BACK' GROUP
- 24 THE 'FLOOR' GROUP
- 25 THE 'BATHROOM' GROUP
- 26 THE 'BULL'S EYE' GROUP
- 27 THE 'NICK' GROUP
- 28 THE 'FIELD' GROUP
- 29 THE 'FOREFRONT' GROUP
- 30 THE 'DREGS' GROUP
- 31 THE 'MEDIA' GROUP
- 32 THE 'ADVERTS' GROUP
- 33 THE 'TEXT' GROUP
- 34 THE 'LOW-DOWN' GROUP
- 35 THE 'ELECTORAL REGISTER' GROUP
- 36 THE 'THEATRE' GROUP
- 37 THE 'CIRCUS' GROUP
- 38 THE 'ARTS' GROUP
- 39 THE 'BOMB' GROUP
- 40 THE 'GO-AHEAD' GROUP
- 41 THE 'AXE' GROUP
- 42 THE 'ACTION' GROUP
- 43 THE 'MEASLES' GROUP
- 44 THE 'LONG JUMP' GROUP
- 45 THE 'PIANO' GROUP
- 46 THE 'TANGO' GROUP
- 47 THE 'UNDERGROUND' GROUP
- 48 THE 'DOLLAR' GROUP
- 49 THE 'ECONOMY' GROUP
- 50 THE 'PASSIVE' GROUP
- 51 THE 'WASHING-UP' GROUP
- 52 THE 'NICETIES' GROUP
- 53 THE 'NORM' GROUP
- 54 THE 'FASHION' GROUP
- 55 THE 'ABOVE' GROUP
- 56 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'IMPOSSIBLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to something with a particular quality, or things with a particular quality or of a particular type. This is a productive use.

*I'm being asked to do the **impossible**.*

*Humphrey told the colleges he wanted to investigate why people believe in the **paranormal**.*

*Switzerland became a necessary pilgrimage for lovers of the **picturesque**.*

absurd	exotic	picturesque	unknown
aesthetic	impossible	positive >2	unthinkable
avant-garde >2	inevitable	possible	usual
banal	infinite	ridiculous	worst
baroque	mundane	sublime	
best	occult	supernatural	
bizarre	paranormal	unexpected	

2 THE 'RICH' AND 'POOR' GROUP

These nouns refer to people who belong to a particular category. (Some people think it is impolite to refer to people with disabilities in this way.) This is a productive use.

They are all plural nouns, except for *accused*, *deceased*, *departed*, and *insured*, which are count nouns.

*The **accused** has an unblemished reputation.*

*Serious food poisoning can be fatal, especially for vulnerable groups such as the **elderly**, the **sick** or the **young**.*

*The report highlights the growing gap between the **rich** and the **poor**.*

*According to Mr Portillo, it is wrong for the **unemployed** to receive money for nothing.*

able-bodied	downtrodden	living	subnormal
accused	dying	lonely	unborn
afflicted	elderly	low-paid	uncommitted
affluent	faithful >1,3	many 7	underprivileged
aged	fallen 2	meek	uneducated
avant-garde 1	few 4	middle-aged	unemployed
bereaved	handicapped	needy	uninitiated
blind	heathen	newborn	unwaged
damned 2	high and mighty	nouveau-riche	unwary
dead	homeless	old	upwardly mobile
deaf	infirm	oppressed	weak
deceased	injured	politically correct	wealthy
departed	insane	poor	well-off
devout	insured	privileged	well-to-do
disabled	jobless	rich	young
disadvantaged	lame	self-employed	
dispossessed	landless	sick	

3 THE 'ENGLISH' GROUP

These nouns refer to people of a particular nationality. (With other nationalities, *the* is used with the plural form of the count noun, as in *the Americans*.)

*But the **English** are a funny lot, as I've often told you.*

British	English	Japanese	Swiss
Cornish	French	Portuguese	Welsh
Dutch	Irish	Spanish	

4 THE 'PUBLIC' GROUP

These nouns refer to a group of people.

*Santa Rosa lay along the **enemy's** main line of attack.*

*But by lap six he had worked his way to the front and quickly pulled away from the rest of the **field**.*

*The **intelligentsia** has enthusiastically supported the restructuring.*

*Resorts such as Cannes, Palm Beach and Le Touquet are frequented by the **jet set**.*

*He appeals to the **middle classes** – because he's one of them.*

*If those kids are in some sort of trouble, it's a crying shame, but the **public** has a right to know about it.*

'My impression is that Soorley is very popular among the rank and file,' he said.

ancients 3	house 2	peerage
antis	human race	people
ayes	intelligentsia	petit bourgeoisie
bourgeoisie	jet set	populace
centre	lads 2	press
chattering classes	left	press corps 12
cloth 3	left-wing	priesthood
community	locals	proletariat
competition 2	lunatic fringe	prosecution
country	mafia	public
crème de la crème	masses	rabble
defence 7	meeting > 1	rank and file
diaspora	middle class	ranks
dramatis personae	mob	rearguard
enemy	monarchy	resistance 6
fair sex	moral majority	right
field 8	multitude	right-wing
floor 5	nobility	royals
gang 3	noes	underground 3
general public	nomenklatura	upper class
hard left	opposite sex	vanguard
hard right	opposition	working class
herd 2	palace 2	world 2
hoi polloi	peasantry	

5 THE 'GOVERNMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a government, branch of government, or official or national organization.

The fire brigade was called.

Mr Michael Heseltine has urged the government to make greater efforts to curb Britain's contribution to global warming.

The party is unlikely to win overall control of the legislature, even if it forges an alliance with other left-wing or nationalist groups.

When Brian Clitheroe left the Navy he didn't turn his back on the water.

administration	diplomatic service	fuzz	Politburo
air force	emergency services	government	Post Office
army	establishment	judiciary	secret police
authorities	executive 5	legislature	state
chancellery	fire brigade	military	system
Civil Service	fire department	navy	treasury
coastguard	fire service	paras	vice squad
diplomatic corps	Foreign Office	police	

6 THE 'PRESIDENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a person (or people) with an official position, usually a position of authority.

The board had decided not to talk publicly on the issue, he said.

He's still the boss.

In any event, the Mayor will not be there to greet the Queen when she briefly visits Hull on Sunday.

The president said the street violence will be quashed.

beak 2	director	ombudsman	ref
bench 4	editor	PM	referee
board 5	executive 4	poet laureate	secretary-general
boss	First Lady	pontiff	Secretary of State
bosun	gaffer	pope	Shah
captain	Governor-General	president	Solicitor General
chairman	Home Secretary	Prime Minister	Speaker
Chancellor	king	procurator fiscal	vatman
Crown Prince	leadership	queen	
Crown Princess	Master 12	Queen Mother	
dauphin	mayor	receiver 3	

7 THE 'PRESIDENCY' GROUP

These nouns refer to an official position.

Jason Leonard has taken over the captaincy from Brian Moore and is already proving a more personable leader.

But he says he has no firm plans to run for the presidency.

captaincy	chancellorship	ministry 3	presidency
chairmanship	editorship	papacy	
championship 2	leadership	premiership	

8 THE 'SELLER' GROUP

These nouns refer to a person who has or may have a particular role in a situation. This use is productive.

And, as the staff were temporary, they could not now be traced so it was not possible to identify the culprit.

The seller had been willing to go as low as £90,000.

You are the kind of person who champions the cause of the underdog.

The winner will receive £2500.

addressee	culprit	seller	underdog
beholder	favourite	sender	winner
buyer	injured party	speaker	

9 THE 'BUTCHER' GROUP

These nouns refer to a place where something is sold, or to a person who works in a shop or provides a service.

Ask the butcher to joint the rabbit into even-sized portions, allowing two or three per person.

On the way home I went to the chemist because I realised I didn't have any nappies or baby food.

My stepmother wanted to call in the doctor, but my father said it was not necessary.

One student she knew of bought two cans of drink from the off-licence on the way to college each morning.

baker	dentist	drugstore	greengrocer
butcher	doctor	fishmonger	grocer
chemist	draper	florist	ironmonger
cleaner	druggist	gasman	newsagent

off-licence optician	pub supermarket	sweet shop tobacconist
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10 THE 'SEA' GROUP

These nouns refer to the world, or to natural things in the environment. (Ice, land, rain, weather, and wind are also often used without the.)

'They made it!' howled Moynahan, tossing his helmet into the **air**.

The thinning of the **ozone layer** makes wearing protective sunglasses more important now than ever.

Today the **sea** is rough.

The **weather** was beautiful.

He spent most of last year jetting around the **world**, opening his eyes to new cultures and new ways of life.

air 2	globe 1	ocean	stratosphere
biosphere	ground	ozone layer	sun
cosmos	heavens	planet	tide
deep 18	high-water mark	rain	universe
earth 2	horizon	rains	water table
ebb 2	ice 3	sea	weather
elements 7	land	sky	wind
environment	macrocosm	skyline	world
firmament	monsoons	solar system	
fourth dimension	moon	spectrum	

11 THE 'OPEN AIR' GROUP

These nouns refer to places outside, rather than inside buildings. (Fresh air is also often used without the.)

At the end of a day in the **open air** the children are ready to sleep soundly.

The report says that people are waving flags and singing patriotic songs in the **streets**.

fresh air	outdoors
open air	street 2

12 THE 'DARK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a place or time with particular light or weather. (Cold, dusk, firelight, heat, light, sun, and twilight are also often used without the.)

After the clocks in Britain go back an hour this weekend, many children will walk home from school in the **dark**.

She peered through the **gloom** and glimpsed the shapeless mound on the small trestle-bed in the corner.

The 911 was prone to skid when braking in the **wet**.

cold	firelight	murk	twilight
dark	gloom	shade	wet
dry	heat	shadows	
dusk	light	sun 2	

13 THE 'DAYTIME' GROUP

These nouns refer to a time or event, including part of a day, a year, a century, or someone's life. (Autumn, harvest, New Year 1, Passover, spring, springtime, summer, summertime, winter, and wintertime are also often used without the.)

He rarely went anywhere in the **daytime**. He was always out at night.

The **future** looks bleak.

In India, Diwali also marks the end of the **monsoon** and the beginning of winter.

Yet, ever since the **Sixties**, Fashion Design has been one of the most over-applied-for courses in British higher education.

Some gardeners feed the bulbs in the **spring** with a high potash fertiliser.

autumn	hereafter	past	summer
change of life	high season	present	summertime
day of reckoning	holidays	rush	thirties
daytime	low season	rush hour	times 9
eighties	menopause	rut	twenties
festive season	millennium	Sabbath	week
fifties	monsoon	seventies	winter
forties	morrow	silly season	wintertime
Fourth of July	New Year	sixties	
future	nineties	spring	
harvest	Passover	springtime	

14 THE 'BEGINNING' AND 'END' GROUP

These nouns refer to the beginning, middle, or end of a time or task.

I hated the school. From the **beginning** I wished I had gone somewhere else.

By the **end**, we all felt pretty disillusioned.

We're doing a lot of the **groundwork** for you.

We are entering the **home straight** and the pace is going to pick up, so we have to be able to stay with it.

beginning	finish	home straight	spadework
end	groundwork	middle	start

15 THE 'SOUND BARRIER' GROUP

These nouns refer to a significant point or level.

Peter Tatchell is calling upon the Government to lower the **age of consent** to 14, regardless of sexual orientation.

On this day in 1947, Chuck Yeager became the first man to break the **sound barrier**.

age of consent	poverty line	speed limit
pain barrier	sound barrier	watershed

16 THE 'CRUNCH' GROUP

These nouns refer to a crucial time, part, or aspect of something.

I am an entertainer. That's the **bottom line**.

I had thought that we could rely on these people when the **crunch** came.

The **issue** is whether the money is spent effectively.

acid test	crux	moral
bottom line	gist	nub
crunch	issue	point

17 THE 'BASICS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the basic aspects of something.

It is possible to learn the **basics** in a short time, which makes it a good method for beginners.

basics	mechanics	rudiments
fundamentals	nitty-gritty	

18 THE 'DOWNSIDE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a bad aspect of something.

The **downside** is that I have to change my phone number, though the phone book will still list me.

downside	rub 7
problem	trouble

19 THE 'OPPOSITE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the opposite of something.

Owning your home should be one of the greatest joys of life. Tragically, for too many it has become the **opposite**.

converse	obverse	reverse
flip side	opposite	

20 THE 'OUTCOME' GROUP

These nouns refer to a result.

Unfortunately for Michael Jackson, whatever the **outcome**, he will never be able to walk away from this story without some of the mud sticking.

The **upshot** is that the Government is now in the most serious political and economic mess it has been in since before the Falklands war.

consequence	outcome	scoreline
end result	result	upshot

21 THE 'EAST' GROUP

These nouns refer to directions.

Below me to the **east** is the flat plain of the Bekaa Valley.

You approach Hinton Ampner from the **north**, passing a large walled kitchen garden on the **right** and the church on the **left**.

east	north-east	south	west
left	north-west	south-east	
north	right	south-west	

22 THE 'LOWLANDS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a region of a country or of the world.

To really explore the **interior** it is advisable to join an organised trek.

It is a land where silver canals criss-cross the **lowlands** through a patchwork of fertile rice fields.

Even in the old days, the town was a place of refuge for thousands of Americans fleeing the harsh winters of the **north**.

The film's producer told how it went down a storm in London, but left audiences in the **provinces** bemused.

back country	hills	north-west	sticks 7
bush 2	hinterland	outback	stockbroker belt
coast	ice cap	pampas	tropics
country 3	interior 3	provinces 2	uplands
countryside	littoral	regions 2	veldt
downs	lowlands	shires 1	west
east	mainland	south	wild
foothills	north	south-east	wilds
highlands	north-east	south-west	

23 THE 'BACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to an area or part of a wide range of things. The area or part is in a particular position.

On the **back**, print your name, age, address and phone number.

Only the original walls of the house remain. The **inside** was gutted and rebuilt.

I kept riding the slide. I'd climb up to the **top** and coast down, sometimes sitting, sometimes on my back, sometimes on my belly.

back	flip side	nearside	side
base	front	offside	top
bottom	inside	outside	underneath
depths	interior 1	rear	
exterior	middle	reverse	

24 THE 'FLOOR' GROUP

These nouns refer to an area or part of a place or building, usually a particular type of place or building, for example a sports ground or a theatre.

When Mum says no, he lies on the **floor** and screams and kicks his feet.

The police drew alongside the Rover, then travelling at 55mph, whereupon it pulled over on to the **hard shoulder** and stopped.

Tania Sorenson was the leading hitter for Springwood with two landing safely in the **outfield** from three attempts.

The plane came down on the **runway**, but slewed through a hedge into a cornfield.

In the evening, I went for a walk along the **seafront**.

She had sat in the **stalls**, engrossed, realizing again what a very fine actor he was.

apron 2	gallery 4	platform	seafront
area 7	gangway	press box	seashore
backbenches	grass 2	press gallery	seaside
barnyard	ground floor	prom	shallows
bleachers	gutter	promenade	stage
box 4	hard shoulder	quad	stalls 6
ceiling	jetty	quadrangle	stand 22,24
circle 9	landing	riverfront	tarmac 2
crease 5	main drag	riverside	terraces 4
downstairs	outfield	roadside	touchline
esplanade	outskirts	roadway	upstairs
fairway	penalty box	runway	wayside
first floor	pitch	schoolyard	wings 5
floor	pithead	seaboard	witness box

25 THE 'BATHROOM' GROUP

These nouns refer to rooms in a house or other building.

Decorating the **bathroom** proved to be another problem.

I turned on the lights in the **dining room**.

I got up from the table. 'Just going to the **gents**.'

bathroom	gents	lavatory	men's room
bog	kitchen	living room	sitting room
cutting room	ladies	loo	toilet
dining room	ladies' room	lounge	

26 THE 'BULL'S EYE' GROUP

These nouns refer to part of an object of some kind.

The **background** is generally white or cream with the finely printed design in another colour.
Annie Oakley put on a sharp-shooting performance, hitting the **bull's-eye** every time.

The **pith** is thin, so there is lots of juicy flesh.

background	foreground	pith	weft
bull's-eye	hypotenuse	pulp	
footplate	kerb	warp	

27 THE 'NICK' GROUP

These nouns refer to public buildings or institutions.

They've been sentenced to four years in the **nick** for 'removing bodily parts from corpse without consent'.

Worst of all were those who could not look after themselves and therefore had to be cared for in the **poorhouse**.

nick 3	slammer	town hall	YMCA
poorhouse	students' union	workhouse	YWCA

28 THE 'FIELD' GROUP

These nouns refer to a place where fighting is taking place.

Troops here are all well prepared for these chemical weapons, and experts believe casualties in the **field** can be minimized.

The full contingent of 1,800 troops will be moved to the **front line** over the next few weeks.

field 6	front 7	trenches 2
firing line 1	front line 1	

29 THE 'FOREFRONT' GROUP

These nouns refer to metaphorical positions.

In all these activities the clergy were in the **forefront**.

He added: 'We simply have to join in the process of rationalisation in the industry rather than stand on the **sidelines**.'

background 3	foreground 2	leading edge	vanguard 1
edge 4	fringe 4 (usu plural)	sidelines 3	
forefront 1	lead 5	stratosphere 2	

30 THE 'DREGS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the whole of something or a part of something.

He sipped at the **dregs** of his tea.

America and Europe want each other to contribute the **lion's share**.

Caryl invested the proceeds and lost the **lot**.

dregs	overflow	works 30
lion's share	remainder	
lot 6	remains	

31 THE 'MEDIA' GROUP

These nouns refer to media and communications. (Telegraph is also often used without the.)

She is known as the sexiest voice on the **airwaves**.

They circulated the screenplay on the **Internet**.

It's hard to make sense of the flood of medical research reported in the **media**.

McIntock speaks to Graham most days on the **phone** and regularly meets him for dinner.

He managed to transmit his passion for the **written word** in a way that was irresistible.

airwaves	infobahn	papers 3	telegraph
blower	Internet	phone	telephone
box 6	mass media	press 11	tube 5
ether 2	media	printed word	written word
grapevine	net 1,11	radio	
gutter press	PA 2	spoken word	

32 THE 'ADVERTS' GROUP

These nouns refer to part of a newspaper or something that is broadcast.

Why can't each TV station have the same volume control and stop the **adverts** blasting you out of your seat?

adverts	funnies	small ads
classifieds	news	

33 THE 'TEXT' GROUP

These nouns refer to part of something written.

Type up the text and use computer graphics to add a professional touch to your publication.
I can remember the tune. I can even remember the words to it.

blurb	fine print	text
epilogue	small print	words

34 THE 'LOW-DOWN' GROUP

These nouns refer to information. (*Dirt* is also often used without *the*.)

This week, in the third in our occasional series on the cost of hobbies, Tracy King gives the low-down on windsurfing.

dirt 4	gospel 2
facts of life	low-down

35 THE 'ELECTORAL REGISTER' GROUP

These nouns refer to a list of some kind.

This month saw the launch of a campaign to encourage young people to join the electoral register.
I don't want a long slide down the rankings, and to hear people talking about what I used to be.
Most items in the retail price index show little acceleration since the beginning of the year.

electoral register	periodic table	retail price index
hit parade	placings	running order
honours list	rankings	zodiac

36 THE 'THEATRE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a thing or place connected with a particular activity, situation, or institution and are used as a way of referring to that activity, situation, or thing. For example, the *big screen* is used to refer to films or the cinema industry, the *throne* is used to refer to the monarchy, and the *dogs* is used to refer to greyhound racing.

The *Brady Bunch Movie*, which kicks off this week, is one of the funniest films ever to hit the big screen in a long time.
He said the Government, by banning the cane in schools and avoiding 'serious' juvenile punishment, had gone too far.
He said Waddell had told him he had won a packet on the horses.
The first 20 years of Postlethwaite's career were spent almost entirely in the theatre.

aisle 2	birch 2	dogs 6	gutter 3
ballot box 2	box office 2	electric chair	horses 2
bench 5	cane >3	factory floor	hustings
big screen	cinema 2	gallows	land 3

negotiating table	screen 2	stage 3
old school tie	silver screen	theatre 2
polls 3	small screen	throne 2

37 THE 'CIRCUS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a type of entertainment. (*Ballet* and *opera* are also often used without *the*.)

Jeremy wants to go to the circus this weekend.

ballet	movies	pictures 6
circus	opera	racers

38 THE 'ARTS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a field of academic or artistic activity.

Some administrators are now predicting the beginning of the end of state funding for the arts.

arts	performing arts
humanities	sciences

39 THE 'BOMB' GROUP

These nouns are used in the singular to refer to a type of thing. (*Booze* is also often used without *the*.)

Edmund Teller, interviewed by Nadelson in Los Alamos, claimed that the Bomb had won the cold war.
He should have kept off the booze, if he was going to drive.
In France and Italy women did not get the vote until 1945.

bomb 2	coil 5	vote 4
booze 1	pill 2	weed 4

40 THE 'GO-AHEAD' GROUP

These nouns refer to a signal or statement that someone is allowed to do something.

Now they hope to get the go-ahead to build a £12m stadium on the site of the old Wearmouth Colliery.
The Brisbane Entertainment Centre was given the thumbs up last week as the venue for the World Junior Ice Skating Championships in November.

all clear	green light	thumbs-up
go-ahead	okay	word 10

41 THE 'AXE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the ending, dismissal, or rejection of something or someone.

These are all shows that have either disappeared from the airwaves over the last year or are facing the axe in the coming months.
Trevor wrote to all the major manufacturers and got the brush-off.
The conventional view of timber extraction is that it is the kiss of death for a rainforest.
He ought to have been given the sack.

axe 3	cold shoulder	sack >2
brush-off	death knell	
chop	kiss of death	

42 THE 'ACTION' GROUP

These nouns refer generally to an exciting situation or place, usually one that someone wants to be in. Some of these are plural nouns: see Section 6.

Miami is where **the action** is in the 90s.

I don't think I should have to defend myself just because I live a dull life away from **the bright lights** and parties.

But one can't help but think she's trying to get into **the limelight** again by this endless contrariness.

action 5	big time	fray	limelight
big city	bright lights	hurly-burly	spotlight

43 THE 'MEASLES' GROUP

These nouns refer to illnesses or other unpleasant states. We include here *blues*, which refers to a state of depression, *giggles*, which refers to uncontrollable laughter, and *jitters*, which refers to a state of extreme nervousness. (*Croup*, *flu*, *hiccups*, *measles*, and *plague* are also often used with no determiner.) Some of these are plural nouns: see Section 6, meaning group 9.

She had to wipe the tears away, still laughing, then got **the hiccups**.

When, at six, he had **the measles**, she sat a week with him in a dark room.

He'd got a bad attack of **the shakes**.

blues	flu	measles	shakes
common cold	giggles	plague	shits
croup	hiccups	pox	sniffles
DT's	jitters	runs	

44 THE 'LONG JUMP' GROUP

These nouns refer to types of contest in athletics, swimming, tennis, or badminton. (*Backstroke*, *breaststroke*, *butterfly*, *doubles*, *mixed doubles*, and *singles* are also often used without *the*.)

Team veteran Nicole Stevenson bravely shook off illness to win **the backstroke**.

In **the doubles**, Gigi Fernandez and Davenport take on what may be a very tired Spanish pair.

Andrew Currey was seventh in **the javelin** with an 81.22m throw.

American sprinter Carl Lewis yesterday hinted he would not compete in **the long jump** because of a recent hamstring injury.

backstroke	discus	marathon	singles
beam	doubles	mixed doubles	sprint
breaststroke	hammer	pentathlon	triple jump
butterfly	high jump	pole vault	
crawl	javelin	pursuit	
decathlon	long jump	shot put	

45 THE 'PIANO' GROUP

These nouns refer to musical instruments. This pattern is used when referring generally to a particular type of instrument, for example when talking someone's ability to play an instrument.

They knew that I could sing and play **the piano**.

I wanted to make **the violin** my life and to devote my life to music.

bagpipes	fiddle	mandolin	triangle
banjo	flute	oboe	trombone
bassoon	French horn	piano	trumpet
cello	glockenspiel	pianola	tuba
clarinet	guitar	recorder	viol
clavichord	harmonica	sax	viola
concertina	harp	saxophone	violin
cornet	harpsichord	sitar	xylophone
double bass	horn	spinnet	
drum	lute	tambourine	

46 THE 'TANGO' GROUP

These nouns refer to dances. (Other names of dances, such as *foxtrot*, *quickstep*, and *waltz*, are sometimes used after *the*.)

I promised myself that some day I would learn to dance **the tango**.

can-can	fandango	twist
cha-cha	rumba	
charleston	tango	

47 THE 'UNDERGROUND' GROUP

These nouns are used to refer to systems of transport.

But motorists can't be forced to leave their cars at home and take **the bus**.

It is not uncommon for people living in big cities to get up before the sun, travel on **the underground** to an artificially-lit workplace and return home at night after the sun has set.

bus	plane	tram
ferry	subway	tube 4
metro	train	underground 2

48 THE 'DOLLAR' GROUP

These nouns refer to currencies. A number of currencies are listed below; other currencies also have this pattern.

And in Milan, **the dollar** rose two-fifths of a cent.

dollar	guilder	pound	yen
drachma	lira	punt	yuan
franc	mark	rand	

49 THE 'ECONOMY' GROUP

These nouns refer to things connected with commerce and finance.

'The evidence that **the economy** is slowing continues to gather,' he said.

One reason, he says, is that alternative fuels can't compete in the **marketplace** alongside gasoline.

But only 27,983 of these workers were employed in the **private sector**.

economy market 3,7	money supply open market	public sector stock exchange
marketplace	private sector	stock market

50 THE 'PASSIVE' GROUP

These nouns are grammatical terms.

The verb is only used in the **passive**.

In the voice-over narration, he refers to himself in the **third person**.

accusative	first person	indicative	plural
active	genitive	interrogative	second person
comparative	imperative	nominative	singular
dative	imperfect	passive	subjunctive
definite article	indefinite article	pluperfect	third person

51 THE 'WASHING-UP' GROUP

These nouns refer to tasks that need doing. This is a productive use. (These nouns are also often used without the.)

I've practically finished the **ironing**.

Then when lunch was over Martha volunteered to do the **washing-up**.

baking	driving	ironing	washing-up
catering	drying up	shopping	
cleaning	dusting	vacuuming	
cooking	hoovering	washing	

This pattern is also used to say that a particular person does or will do something, rather than other people.

This time he did the **talking**.

I leave the **thinking** to you, Bettina, I always have done.

52 THE 'NICETIES' GROUP

These nouns refer to suitable or expected actions or words.

The **niceties** over, the interview was only five minutes old and it was already clear that the big subject would have to be addressed.

courtesies	formalities	proprieties
decencies	niceties	

53 THE 'NORM' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate what is usual or average.

But special influence wielded by ethnic groups over foreign policy is the **norm** in US politics.

average	norm
mean 3.0	rule 4

54 THE 'FASHION' GROUP

These nouns are used to say that something is fashionable or popular.

Anti-heros have been the **fashion** for a long time, both on the screen and in real life.

fashion	rage 4	thing 17
---------	--------	----------

55 THE 'ABOVE' GROUP

These nouns are used to refer to something that has already been said or written, or to something that will be said or written.

About three-quarters of the land is farmland, 10 per cent is occupied by towns and villages, 9 per cent by forests, while the remainder consists of roads, railways, recreational areas, and so on. Even in the more urbanized western part of the country, agriculture still occupies more than 60 per cent of the land. From the **above** it can easily be understood that for a long time rural planning in The Netherlands has been primarily agricultural planning.

above	foregoing	latter
following	former	undersigned

56 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are many other nouns which have this pattern. These include nouns which:

- are used metaphorically, e.g. **back burner**, **backdoor**, **high ground**
- relate to something unique, e.g. **Tarot**, **three Rs**, **women's movement**
- refer to an aspect of a situation, e.g. **arithmetic**, **final**, **vicinity**
- indicate a relationship, e.g. **missus**, **mother country**

The Government has put this issue on the **back burner**.

Van Morrison has to be one of the greatest modern exponents of the **blues**.

That would put her very much in the **firing line** as far as the anger of school governors is concerned.

He was of the opinion that the British Government should not take the **initiative** in the matter.

It puts the **onus** on him to clean up his act.

Now the **pendulum** has swung too far the other way.

Critics of homoeopathy are inclined to suggest that any benefit felt by patients is the result of the **placebo effect** (improvement due to belief rather than any active medicine).

Daniel used to ignore his bank statements, fantasizing that he might win the **pools** or be left a legacy.

'People want to escape the **rat race** and bring their kids up in the country,' he said.

Her rent was almost due into the bargain and she was a bit short of the **readies**.

And in the Virginia Slims tournament in New England, the second seed Mary Joe Fernandez and third seed Gabriella Sabatini have reached the **semi-finals**.

It was daylight, 18.30 hours, and the **traffic** was light.

To be able to read the Bible in the **vernacular** was a liberating experience that freed the reader from hearing only the set passages read in the church.

ancien regime 2	Host 11	rot 3
arithmetic 3	idea 6	rule book 2
artillery 2	infants >2 (school)	rule of law
back burner	initiative 2	sack 4 (bed)
backdoor 2	kiss of life	Sacrament 2
balance 5,10	last rites	scrapheap 1,2
ballpark 3	law 1	scriptures
banns	lottery	semi-finals
batting >2	lotus position	semis 2
beat 5	mail 1	sights 6
bill 3	matter 7	silence 2
blame	metric system	slave trade
blues 2	milk round 2	slipstream 1
body politic	missus 1	sound 1,3
breakfast table	mother country 2	star turn
chase >3,7	motherland	status quo
collective unconscious	oath 2	students' union 1
crack 7	odds 1	subconscious 1
credit 6	old-boy network	surface 3
Crown Jewels 1	onus	Tarot
death penalty	pendulum 2	tea table
dole 1	picture 10	third-degree 2
donkey work	pijs 3,4	three Rs
draft 5	pits 6	time signal
electric 4	placebo effect	title role
eleven-plus	pools 7	tone 4
evil eye 1,2	post 1	toss 4
exchange 7 (telephone)	pot 8,9	traffic 1
final	proceedings 2,3	vernacular 1
firing line 2	proceeds 5	vertical 2
football pools	purse strings	vicinity
Godhead	rag trade	vote 3
going 3,4	rat race	way 12
grain 5 (of wood)	readies >7	wherewithal
greenhouse effect	real world	women's movement
helm 2	rhythm method	wooden spoon 2
high ground 1	rights 3,3 (to a book)	
horizontal >1	Roman alphabet	

Other productive uses

Nouns are preceded by the determiner *the* in several other contexts.

- 1 Nouns which refer to parts of the body are preceded by *the* in medical contexts.

*Most of the alcohol you drink is rapidly absorbed into the **bloodstream**.*

*Children with the defective gene lack a particular protein which produces enzymes necessary to balance chemicals in the **brain**.*

- 2 Nouns which are being used in the singular to refer to a particular kind of animal or thing are preceded by *the*.

*The **hibiscus beetle** is black and just a few millimetres long.*

*Since the invention of the **steam engine**, luxury trains have for ever inspired fantasies of romance and adventure.*

- 3 Sometimes there is only ever one thing of a particular kind in a place, or a vehicle or machine only ever has one part of a particular kind. Nouns which refer to these things or parts are often preceded by *the*.

*My daughter can barely even see the **blackboard** from where she sits at the back of the class. Within moments of the **curtain** rising, Prokofiev's heroine tells all in a narration that sets the dramatic tone for the entire opera.*

*A Gascoigne free-kick 10 minutes later found Gough, whose header sailed into the **net**.*

*No, it wasn't a taxi, it was a private car with a bearded man at the **wheel**.*

- 4 Nouns which refer to qualities or abilities that are needed to do something often occur in the pattern *the N to-inf*: see Section 21, Other related patterns. They sometimes also occur preceded by *the*, but not followed by a to-infinitive.

*Most would have liked to have acted professionally, but admit that they never had either the **opportunity** or the **nerve**.*

15 poss N

The noun is preceded by a possessive – that is, a possessive determiner or a noun group ending in 's.

possessive		Noun
their		approval
my		aunt
his	calm	demeanour
her	blue	eyes
the car's		owner
its		peak

Many nouns sometimes have a possessive in front of them. For example, a possessive is used to indicate that something is owned by someone, as in *my car*, or to indicate when something took place, as in *yesterday's meeting*.

The nouns listed here are those which are always or typically preceded by a possessive.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'MUM' AND 'DAD' GROUP
- 2 THE 'LOVER' GROUP
- 3 THE 'FRIEND' GROUP
- 4 THE 'FOLLOWER' GROUP
- 5 THE 'COLLEAGUE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'GUARDIAN' GROUP
- 7 THE 'PUPIL' GROUP
- 8 THE 'BOSS' GROUP
- 9 THE 'SERVANT' GROUP
- 10 THE 'THERAPIST' GROUP
- 11 THE 'REPRESENTATIVE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'FLATMATE' GROUP
- 13 THE 'COUNTERPART' GROUP
- 14 THE 'JUNIOR' GROUP
- 15 THE 'OPPONENT' GROUP
- 16 THE 'ACCUSER' GROUP

- 17 THE 'FOUNDER' GROUP
- 18 THE 'NEMESIS' AND 'SALVATION' GROUP
- 19 THE 'RELEASE' GROUP
- 20 THE 'RETURN' GROUP
- 21 THE 'RESIGNATION' GROUP
- 22 THE 'APOLOGY' GROUP
- 23 THE 'LANGUAGE' GROUP
- 24 THE 'MESSAGE' GROUP
- 25 THE 'CREATION' GROUP
- 26 THE 'INDEPENDENCE' GROUP
- 27 THE 'FORTUNES' GROUP
- 28 THE 'WELL-BEING' GROUP
- 29 THE 'CRUST' GROUP
- 30 THE 'FACE' GROUP
- 31 THE 'REMAINS' GROUP
- 32 THE 'DIGESTION' GROUP
- 33 THE 'ABILITY' GROUP
- 34 THE 'MIND' GROUP
- 35 THE 'MOOD' AND 'ATTITUDE' GROUP
- 36 THE 'OPINION' GROUP
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- 61 THE 'PATH' GROUP
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- 64 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'MUM' AND 'DAD' GROUP

These nouns refer to relatives. *Ex* refers to a former relative.

It was *Sholes's brother-in-law*, a mathematician, who found a solution.

My *dad* wouldn't let my *mum* go to work so we were struggling along on one wage.

She takes him home to San Francisco to meet *her folks*.

She and *her husband* David came to the area from the East Coast in the '70s.

ancestor	gran	ma	parents
aunt	grandad	mam	pop
auntie	granddaddy	mama	progenitor
boy 3	grandchild	mamma	progeny
brother	granddaughter	mammy	sister
brother-in-law	grandfather	menfolk	sister-in-law
child	grandma	missus	son
cousin	grandmother	mom	son-in-law
dad	grandpa	momma	stepbrother
daddy	grandparent	mommy	stepchild
daughter	grandson	mother	stepdaughter
daughter-in-law	granny	mother-in-law	stepfather
descendant	half-brother	mum	stepmother
ex	half-sister	mummy	stepparent
family	hubby	nan	stepsister
father	husband	nephew	stepson
father-in-law	in-laws	niece	uncle
first cousin	kids	offspring	wife
folks	kin	old lady	womenfolk
forebear	kindred	old man	
forefather	kinsman	pa	
girl 2	kinswoman	papa	

2 THE 'LOVER' GROUP

These nouns refer to romantic or sexual partners.

My *girlfriend* was waiting on the platform.

A woman who admitted plotting to kill *her lover's* wife was jailed yesterday for eight years.

If you or *your partner* smoke, try to stop or at least cut down on the amount you smoke.

admirer 2	date 9	lady friend	paramour
beau	ex	love 8	partner 1
beloved	fella	lover	suitor
betrothed	fiancé	man 7	sweetheart
boyfriend	fiancée	mate 3,4	woman 5
conquest 4	girlfriend	mistress 1	

3 THE 'FRIEND' GROUP

These nouns refer to friends or to a group of friends.

Devoted to *her coterie* of high-powered friends, Midori can be unsparing when it comes to other society women.

'It's the most wonderful idea,' says *Kate's friend*, Pam.

My son and *his mates* were walking down the road when this bloke ran past shouting: 'It's a bomb'.

acquaintance 1	confidante	friend	pal
alter ego 3	coterie	intimate	school friend
chum	crony	mate 1	
confidant	crowd 2	milieu	

4 THE 'FOLLOWER' GROUP

These nouns refer to people who admire or support someone. We include here *proponent*, which refers to someone who supports an idea.

Mr Berlusconi and his **camp** naturally interpreted these words as an accommodating attitude from the head of state.

Mr Temaru said he had since told his **followers** not to use violence, but admitted there were 'extremists' in Papeete.

I'm still here, and it's my **public** that I have to thank for that.

If the Prime Minister's **supporters** cannot do better than this, they deserve to lose.

admirer 1 (usu plural)	disciple	power base	supporter (usu plural)
ally 3	fan club	proponent	sympathizer
camp 5	follower (usu plural)	public 2	
devotee	following	readership	

5 THE 'COLLEAGUE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who helps or works with someone, and has the same status. We include here *ally*, which refers to a country that helps another one in a war.

Initial inquiries by West Midlands Police into the incident have revealed that the gunman and his **accomplice** live in London.

He said significant progress also had been made in breaking down the so-called 'code of silence' which stopped police giving evidence against their **colleagues**.

Mark Woodforde and his **partner** Todd Woodbridge had their challenge for the Australian Open doubles championship ended in a surprise result.

accomplice	cohort	comrade-in-arms	workmate
affiliate	collaborator	co-star	
ally 1	colleague	partner 2, 4	
associate	comrade	team-mate	

6 THE 'GUARDIAN' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who helps or protects someone younger, poorer, or less powerful than themselves.

She needed her **guardian's** permission to travel and was supposed to stay only a year until her younger brother finished at school.

His **mentor** was the Columbia investment guru Ben Graham, and Buffett worked for him briefly in New York before returning to set up his own investment firm.

When Michelangelo's **patron**, Cosimo de' Medici, laid claim to the contents of the dead artist's studio, only ten drawings were found.

fairy godmother	godparent	mentor	protector
godfather	guardian	patron	sugar daddy
godmother	guardian angel	patron saint	

7 THE 'PUPIL' GROUP

These nouns refer to a person whom someone is responsible for or helps in some way.

In the afternoon he took his **charges** to museums, parks, and entertainments, keeping one eye on them and another on his books.

The Reverend Peter Irwin-Clark is surely right in refusing to tolerate adultery among his **flock**.

I teach my **pupils** about all the world's faiths.

charge 9	godchild	godson	pupil
flock 4	goddaughter	protégé	stable 9

8 THE 'BOSS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a person who is in charge or has higher status in an organization or group. *Handler*, *master* 2, and *mistress* 4 refer to the person who owns or is in charge of a dog. We include here *elders*, which refers to people who are considered to be superior because they are older.

You must not laugh at your **bettors**, no matter how ridiculous they may be.

I need some advice on how best to approach my **boss** for a rise.

They have lost all respect for their **elders**.

The dog lives with its **handler** to enhance that bonding process.

Kingsley Throver told Winchester Crown Court yesterday that he had informed his **superiors** that regulations on defence contracts were being broken.

bettors	handler	mistress 3, 4	seniors
boss	leader	overlord	superior 4
elders	master 1, 2	paymaster	

9 THE 'SERVANT' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who works for a particular person or has lower status than them in an organization.

The prince's **entourage** occupies 40 rooms of the Charles Hotel.

Pol Pot and his **henchmen** fled into the jungles along the Cambodian-Thai border after the Vietnamese overthrew their regime in 1979.

In the president's office in the Quirinale Palace hang two large tapestries, depicting the adventures of Don Quixote and his **servant** Sancho Panza.

The Queen is now alienated from her **subjects**, not because she has changed but because we have.

Some of their **subordinates** might even question whether they deserved to keep their jobs.

assistant	juniors	page	slave
batman	lieutenant 2	retinue	stooge
creature 3	maid	right-hand man	subject
deputy	man 5, 6, 9	running mate	subordinate
dresser	minion	secretary	valet
entourage	mouthpiece	servant	
henchman	PA	sidekick	

10 THE 'THERAPIST' GROUP

These nouns refer to people who perform a professional service.

Her **agent**, Deborah Green adds: 'It's an excellent start to her career.'

My **therapist** introduced me to a new set of relaxation techniques to do each time anxiety or panic attacks started.

adviser	dentist	hairstresser	trainer
agent	doctor	lawyer	
analyst	family doctor	press agent	
counsel 4	GP	therapist	

11 THE 'REPRESENTATIVE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who represents a person or group of people.

Reginald Bartholomew, President Bill Clinton's **envoy**, is urging the Muslims to keep talking.

So I have written to my **MP** about it because although I agree that it should be made law I want it extended to cover all schools.

The owner's **representative**, Mark Zell, insisted on meeting me in person rather than speak on the telephone.

emissary	MP
envoy	representative

12 THE 'FLATMATE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who lives in the same place as someone else, or who comes from the same place.

Lewis took the gold in a time of 9.86. In second place was his **compatriot** and former world record holder, Leroy Burrell, in a time of 9.88.

That evening I announced to my **flatmate** that I'd been caught shoplifting.

They were careful to consult their **neighbours** about it all first, as making the wall slightly higher would mean them losing light.

cellmate	countryman	neighbour	stablemate
classmate	countrywoman	roommate	
companion	flatmate	schoolmate	
compatriot	housemate	shipmate	

13 THE 'COUNTERPART' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who has, for example, the same status, position, name, or religion as someone else, or to something that has the same function as something else. *Heir*, *heir apparent*, and *successor* refer to someone who will have the same position as someone else when that person dies or retires. *Predecessor* refers to someone who used to have the same position as someone else.

One possibility is that Mr Tarnoff will extend an invitation from President Bill Clinton to his Chinese **counterpart**, Jiang Zemin, for a summit in Washington later this year.

Candidates should have a first or second class Honours degree, or its **equivalent**, in Mathematics or a numerate science.

It's the only time, incidentally, where William Hurt has appeared in the same film as his equally famous **namesake** John Hurt.

She first paid tribute to her **predecessor** Maurice Foley, and then introduced herself.

brethren	double 10	namesake	shadow >5
brother 2	equivalent	opposite number	sister 4
contemporary	fellows 3	peer 3 (usu plural)	successor
co-religionist	heir	predecessor	
counterpart	heir apparent	replacement 2	

14 THE 'JUNIOR' GROUP

These nouns are used to say that someone is different from someone else, or is not different. They usually come after the verb *be*.

I myself am convinced that no empire in world history has been its **equal** in humanity and benign dedication to the welfare of its subjects.

And in doing so, she met her present husband, Bill Sigmund, who is 20 years **her junior**.

Everyone is **my superior** in some way.

elder	junior 2	superior 7
equal	senior 3	

15 THE 'OPPONENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who is fighting, competing with, or hostile to someone else.

We are aware that they are helping our **enemies**.

At 25, the London-born, Canadian-raised boxer, was 11 years younger than his **opponent**.

And in the presidential contest, Mr Mugabe took five times as many votes as his **rival**, Mr Edgar Tekere.

adversary	competitor	opponent
challenger	enemy	rival

16 THE 'ACCUSER' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who attacks, criticizes, or otherwise ill-treats someone.

Sparks flew when Jean stormed into the staffroom and confronted her **accuser**, an industrial tribunal was told.

He said that at a personal level his **interrogators** had been friendly and that at no point was he abused.

accuser	captor	detractor	oppressor
assailant	conqueror	interrogator	pursuer
attacker	critic 2	killer	tormentor

17 THE 'FOUNDER' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who makes, starts, or owns something or someone.

Less than a month after the festivities for the 25th anniversary of 'Star Trek', its **creator**, Gene Roddenberry, died at the age of 70.

begetter	maker	progenitor
creator	originator	
founder	owner	

18 THE 'NEMESIS' AND 'SALVATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone or something that destroys or saves someone.

For three of the five harsh laps Clarke showed grit and determination, but Tomac turned out to be his **nemesis**.

Work, perhaps, was **his salvation** in the most difficult of times.

downfall 2 nemesis undoing
hope 5 salvation 3

19 THE 'RELEASE' GROUP

These nouns refer to events and processes. The possessive indicates who or what is affected by the event or process. With many of these nouns, the noun is usually or sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase. This is a productive use.

Mr Backhouse's **appointment** as chairman in May was a sign of this business realignment.

David Peterson, a former premier of Ontario, called for **his dismissal**.

Her arrival in Canberra, and **her elevation** to the Cabinet after Richardson's departure, was not exactly greeted with joy by her Labor colleagues.

Every tonne of this waste paper uses 90.000 litres of water in **its manufacture**.

His parole conditions are likely to include that he stays under 'house arrest' for at least six months after **his release**.

absorption 2	division 1	foundation 2	posting
appointment 1	election 2	founding	reinstatement
capture 1	elevation 1	inclusion	release
construction 2	enthronement	induction	replacement 1
defence 6	exclusion 2	installation 2	selection 1
dismissal	expulsion	manufacture	sending-off
disqualification	formation 1,2	nomination	

20 THE 'RETURN' GROUP

These nouns refer to movement from one place to another. With many of these nouns, the noun is usually or sometimes followed by an adverb or a prepositional phrase.

Once again I must apologise for the disruption to **your journey** to work this morning.

Detectives from the West Midlands who had been trailing Mr Watts had not told their colleagues in South Yorkshire of **their movements**.

Although neither one of us held out much hope of ever meeting again, we corresponded regularly upon **my return** to England.

His travels took him to the Canary Islands and across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and back.

appearance 3	comings and goings	entry 2	return 2
approach 1	departure 1	homecoming	travels
arrival 1	emigration	journey	voyage
ascent 3	entrance 2,3	movements 5	wanderings

21 THE 'RESIGNATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions or activities. The possessive indicates who performs the action. Some of these nouns are always followed by of when used in this pattern. This is a productive use.

For all societies, fund raising is an essential part of **their activities**.

Their attempts to get an explanation from the society have left them baffled.

For a year Tibor planned **his escape**.

The figures represent the first instalment of the bill now being paid by British people for the Government's **mishandling** of the economic crisis.

The Mayor of Nice, Mr Jacques Medecin, has announced **his resignation** after twenty-four years in office.

Hopkins plays a military colonel who moves his family to the backwoods of Montana to protest the government's **treatment** of American Indians.

abdication	dalliance	inaction	reckoning
ablutions	dealings	initiative	recognition 2 (of sth)
action	devotions	instigation	resignation
activities 3	discoveries	interpretation	revision 2
aim 6	doings	invasion	ruminations
arithmetic 2	endeavour	labour 5	support
assistance	escape	labours 1	table manners
attempt	espousal (of sth)	machinations	timekeeping
attendance 1	exploit (usu plural)	ministry 2	timing
behaviour	failure	mishandling (of sth)	treatment 2 (of sth)
conduct	footwork	mismanagement	ways 5
conquest 3 (of sth)	foray 1	offensive 2,3	wiles
conversion 2	game 6	patronage	withdrawal 2
crying	guidance	portrayal	wooing (of sth)
custom	handling (of sth)	reading 3	work

22 THE 'APOLOGY' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is said or written. A few of these nouns are always followed by of when used in this pattern. With nearly all these nouns, the possessive indicates the speaker or writer; however, in the case of *biography* and *obituary*, it sometimes indicates the subject of the writing.

But I was so hurt or mad – both, I suppose – that I refused to accept **her apology**.

He believes that, in the absence of a death penalty, the mandatory life sentence is needed to reflect society's **condemnation** of the crime.

Removing organs without the patient's **consent** is dubious practice medically and legally speaking.

We said **our goodbyes** and left her.

He has spent much of his early retirement ensconced in his modest Warsaw villa writing **his memoirs**.

She would have been pleased with the headlines of **her obituary** in the New York Times on 20 March 1959 which styled her as a 'Writer, Journalist and Feminist'.

I'm amazed by **your remark**.

His writings were marked by an extraordinary lucidity and elegance of style.

acceptance	biography	injunction 2	say-so
account	blandishments	lament	silence 3
acknowledgement	blessing 2	manifesto	teachings
acquiescence	claim	memoirs	testimony
advocacy (of sth)	column 5	obituary	treatise
agreement 4	compliments 4	patter 3	utterance
announcement	concurrence	prose	version 2
apology	condemnation (of sth)	ramblings	word 9
application	consent	recommendation	words 2
approval	demand	remark	writing 4
assent	estimate 2	reminiscences	writings 5
autobiography	goodbyes 2	rudeness	
autograph	humour 1	sandwich 1	

23 THE 'LANGUAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the way that something is said or written.

Honey, I can't read your **handwriting**.

The expression 'one degree under' most likely came from navigators' **jargon**, describing a ship slightly off course by one degree.

I think his **language** is extreme and unnecessary.

argot	handwriting	language 4,5	phraseology
grammar 2	jargon	parlance	typing 2

24 THE 'MESSAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the idea that someone is trying to communicate.

Their **message** is: 'We are not victims any more.'

I see your **point**.

drift 10	message 2
meaning	point 2

25 THE 'CREATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to something produced or achieved by someone.

The eclectic inventor Clive Sinclair last week unveiled his latest **creation**: an electric bicycle called the Zike.

They added a face and then stepped back to admire their **handiwork**.

Glenn Miller's unique **sound** was also taking Britain by storm, brought over by the 1.5 million American troops who had arrived by June 1944.

Her **time** was just five seconds outside her own Australian and Commonwealth record.

brainchild	handiwork	masterpiece 2	time 17
cooking 1	legacy 2	masterwork	tracks
creation	life's work	output	tread 3
grade 3	magnum opus	sound 1,4	work 8

26 THE 'INDEPENDENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to states or situations. With many of these nouns, the noun is usually or sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase. This is a productive use.

On March 16, Robert Kennedy announced his **candidacy** for the Democratic presidential nomination.

On one level, the novel was designed as an allegory of a civilization in its **death throes**.

Dave Wilkins turned to God after his drug **habit** almost destroyed his life.

When Mrs Mary Ryan lost her sight, she also lost her **independence**.

But men's groups say their **plight** has been largely ignored.

'I think anyone in my **position** obviously has to look at those questions,' she said.

And their **reliance** on foreign oil is dramatically higher than ours.

absence 1	acquaintanceship	candidacy	engagement 2
absorption 3	addiction	candidature	enslavement
acquaintance 2	availability	death throes	equilibrium

existence	monopoly	post 2,1	reliance
freedom	mortality	predicament	situation
friendship	nakedness	presence 1,2,5	stay
habit 3	plight	privacy	
independence	position 4,7	relationship	

27 THE 'FORTUNES' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's life in general, especially when it involves problems.

Why the decline in his **fortunes**?

Their **future** is uncertain.

I am grateful to all the people who have helped me through my **troubles** and thankful that the court showed compassion.

Then I lost my job and it was like my **world** collapsed.

circumstances 3	history 5	problems	way of life
destiny	ills	prospects	woes
fate 2	life cycle	social life	world 5
finances	lifestyle	troubles	
fortunes	lot 7	universe 2	
future 3	past 2	upbringing	

28 THE 'WELL-BEING' GROUP

These nouns refer to a good or advantageous state and are used when talking about protecting or benefiting someone.

I'm only doing it for your own **good**, darling.

It also makes sense to protect your **interests**.

It is so out of character for her to go off without a word and we are extremely concerned for her **well-being**.

benefit 2	good 10	safety 4
convenience	health	welfare
edification	interests 5	well-being

29 THE 'CRUST' GROUP

These nouns refer to part of something.

The **earth's crust** is made up of large plates moving relative to each other.

Judd also bought an old hotel in Switzerland, transforming its **interior** with his vision of calm spatial order.

base	core	epicentre	interior
binding	crust	exterior	periphery
coastline	environs	heartland	side

30 THE 'FACE' GROUP

These nouns refer to part of a person's or animal's body, or to their whole body. This use is productive: any noun which indicates a part of the body is often used after a possessive. We list below the nouns for which this pattern is most significant.

She was lying on her **back** staring at the ceiling.

Its **coat** gleamed a reddish bronze in the sunlight and its nostrils flared.

Her **face** was pale and the shine of tears lay on her cheeks.

Joe unfolded his lanky **frame** from the car and headed up the steps without a word.

abdomen	eyebrow (usu plural)	jaw	rear
anatomy	face	knee	roe
ankle	features 2	knuckle (usu plural)	rump
arm	figure 6	lap	scalp
back	finger (usu plural)	leg	shoulder
beak	foot	limb (usu plural)	side
belly	forearm	lip (usu plural)	snout
bloodstream	forefinger	locks	solar plexus
body	forehead	mane	stomach
bonce	frame 4	middle	tail
bottom	front	mouth	taste bud (usu plural)
breast 1,2	genitals	mug 5	teeth
brow	gut 3	musculature	throat
bulk 2	guts 1	muzzle	thumb
bum	hair	nail (usu plural)	toe (usu plural)
chest	hairline	neck	tongue
chin	hand	nose	tooth (usu plural)
claw (usu plural)	heart	nut 8	torso
coat 2	heel (usu plural)	palate	trunk 3,6
crown 5	hindquarters	palm	visage
digestive system	hip	paw	waist
ear	hooter 2	person 7	waistline
elbow	hump	physique	wing (usu plural)
extremities	innards	private parts	womb
eye (usu plural)	insides	privates	

31 THE 'REMAINS' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's dead body.

His **remains** had been disinterred earlier in the day from an unmarked grave near the Chilean coast.

ashes 2	corpse
body 3	remains 6

32 THE 'DIGESTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a bodily process or function, or to something connected with the body.

Sunflower seeds are also said to be good for **your digestion**.

My **heartbeat** increased and I licked dry lips.

There's no doubt that I've completely messed up my **metabolism**.

balance	breathing	heartbeat	temperature
biological clock	digestion	life	
breath	health	metabolism	

33 THE 'ABILITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to abilities.

His **eyesight** is fine.

Bill tested my **mettle** more severely than any other suicidal client I have had.

I did everything in **my power** to make sure Russell would keep loving me.

Ability 1, inability, and incapacity are always followed by a to-infinitive clause.

People also vary in **their ability** to communicate their needs and demands to others.

ability	energy 3 (usu plural)	incapacity	reactions 4
accomplishments	eyesight	mettle	sight 1
artistry	faculties	potential	skill
capability	hearing	power 3	touch 16
capacity	inability	reach	

34 THE 'MIND' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's mind or mental abilities.

In the second part of the book we turn **our attention** to the primary school.

I think **her conscience** may have troubled her.

His **intellect**, formidable analytical power and extensive knowledge of Jewish life commanded wide respect.

There was no doubt in **her mind** that Rick was innocent of Coughlin's murder.

acumen	faculties	judgment 2	spirit
attention	focus 3	logic 3	subconscious
brain 2	grasp 5	memory	thoughts 3
conscience	intellect	mind	unconscious
consciousness	IQ	soul	wits

35 THE 'MOOD' AND 'ATTITUDE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's general mood, attitudes, or feelings. We include here breast, heart, and heartstrings which are used when talking about someone's feelings.

I find **their attitude** complacent in the extreme.

What's going on with Dole, however, is not some long-simmering anger bubbling up from his **breast**.

Her **heart** ached over the separation from Alex.

I do think the police are trying to change **their mindset**.

His **mood** is hardly likely to have been enhanced by this turn of events.

Keep in mind that your reader may not share **your values** and indeed may even hold opposite ones.

The striking thing about all these works is their identical focus on **the father's** rather than **the mother's viewpoint**.

affections	frame of mind	outlook	standpoint
angle 4	frame of reference	perspective	state of mind
approach	heart 2	philosophy	values
attitude	heartstrings	point of view	vantage point
breast 3	line 20	politics 2	view
consciousness 2	mentality	principles	viewpoint
ethics	mindset	sensibility	world view
ethos	mood	sexuality	
feeling 1	morale	stance 1	
feelings 2,3	nerves 2	standards	

36 THE 'OPINION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a particular opinion or idea. With many of these nouns, the noun is usually or sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase.

*'My **aim** is to find the right balance,' she explains.*

*He'd actually made contact about two years before, writing to me about all his **hopes** and **fears**.*

*First of all, my **impression** of the debate last night was that the president did much better than he has in other encounters.*

*What's your **opinion** of him?*

*When I came back to check, he was engrossed in a section explaining Einstein's **Theory** of Relativity.*

agenda 1	feeling 8	opinion	tenet
aim	finding (usu plural)	perception	theory
aspiration	game plan	policy	thinking
assumption	hope	position 8	thoughts 4
belief	identity 2	preconception	understanding
contention	impression	purpose	verdict
dream 3	instinct	reaction	view
estimate 3	motivation	self-image	will
estimation	object 2	sentiment	wish
fear	objective	take 42	

37 THE 'DISMAY' GROUP

These nouns refer to particular feelings. With many of these nouns, the noun is usually or sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase. This is a productive use.

*But in some insidious way, his **craving** for power is something that it's hard for him to control.*

*To her **dismay**, she found herself surrounded by exactly the sort of temptation she was least able to withstand.*

*Samoan coach Bryan Williams also expressed his **displeasure** at his team's over-physical approach.*

*My **love** for him has been destroyed by our inequality.*

abhorrence	craving	fixation	passion
ambivalence	desire	hatred	preference
annoyance	devotion	inclination	spleen 2
appreciation	dismay	liking	trust
approval	displeasure	love	unease
chagrin	enthusiasm	love affair 2	wrath
concern	fetish	mortification	

38 THE 'STUPIDITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to qualities or characteristics. This is a productive use.

*Whether or not one believes he is right, he should be applauded for his **integrity**.*

*Despite its **popularity** in countries like Australia, ostrich is rarely on the menu in Europe.*

*I pray that my wife will forgive me for my **stupidity**.*

*Her **tendency** to denigrate herself and to idealize those to whom she becomes attached further clouds her judgment.*

absent-mindedness	fame	magnetism	stupidity
affinity	frankness	manliness	suitability
allure	grandeur	mystique	supremacy
antiquity	gullibility	nearness	tendency
appeal	honesty	paleness	tolerance
beauty	humanity	poise	unfamiliarity
bluntness	importance	popularity	unpopularity
brilliance	indecisiveness	potency	unpredictability
desirability	inflexibility	predisposition	utility
distinctiveness	integrity	rarity	virtuosity
divinity	intensity	relevance	waywardness
efficacy	intransigence	significance	weight
efficiency	Jewishness	simplicity	
evasiveness	magic	size	

39 THE 'BEARING' GROUP

These nouns refer generally to the way someone moves, speaks, or looks.

*He was tall, elegant and good-looking with a touch of arrogance in his **bearing**.*

*Judging by his **speech** and his unsteady **gait**, he had obviously been drinking heavily.*

*Her **tone** was no longer light and bantering; now it was soft and comforting.*

appearance 2	expression	mien	stride 3
bearing	exterior 2	pace 2	style 4
carriage 5	gait	speech 2	tone
delivery 3	gaze	stance 2	voice
demeanour	manner 3	step 8	walk 6

40 THE 'SHORTCOMING' AND 'MERIT' GROUP

These nouns refer generally to the good, bad, or characteristic qualities, features, or behaviour of someone or something.

*They were well accustomed to his **eccentricities**.*

*Hastings was given no opportunity to counterattack in the thrilling manner that was once his **hallmark**.*

*Its chief **merit** is that it will grow in deep shade on a north wall or under trees.*

*I'm more aware of my abilities and also more painfully aware of my **shortcomings**.*

Achilles heel	eccentricities	idiosyncrasies	saving grace
characteristic	failings	limitations	shortcoming (usu plural)
defect	fault	merit	trademark 2
deficiencies	hallmark 1	peculiarity	trait

41 THE 'NATURE' GROUP

These nouns refer generally to an aspect of something or someone that can be perceived, measured, or discovered. We include here *guilt* and *innocence*, which refer to something that can be determined.

*Everything about its **design** was different.*

*She initially refused to reveal her **identity**.*

*Only a fool could imagine that mankind would change its **nature** for the sake of an idea.*

*The government is considering banning an ingredient used in dietary supplements because of doubts about its **safety**.*

*Are there any particular factors which govern a baby's **weight** and **size**?*

Anyone knowing **his whereabouts** is asked to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 800 400.

authenticity	form 4,12	magnitude	size
biology 2	freezing point	make-up 2,3	smell
calibre	geography 2	melting point	speed
character	girth	nature	stature 1
colouring	guilt	orientation 4	status 4,5
composition	hardness	origin	structure 1
condition	height	performance 2	validity
contours	identity 1	perfume	value
density	image	personality	weight
depth	innocence 2	physiology	whereabouts
design	length	provenance	width
dimensions	lifespan	purity 2	wingspan
disposition	lines 17	safety 3	worth
ecology 2	location	scale 1	
extent	looks 3	scent	

42 THE 'NAME' AND 'ADDRESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to information about someone that might be asked for.

And what was **his date of birth**? Can you remember that?

Write your **name** and **address** on the back of your cheque.

You could tell **his occupation** just by looking at him.

address	first name	mother tongue	roots 5
age	forename	name	serial number
ancestry	genealogy	nationality	sex
background	given name	occupation	status 1
birth 3	initial (<i>usu plural</i>)	orientation 2	surname
blood group	IQ	origin 2	title
bloodline	job	pedigree	trade 4
colour 5	maiden name	profession	vital statistics
date of birth	measurements	rank	
family name	middle name	ranking	

43 THE 'REPUTATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's reputation or record.

Vincent established **his reputation** during a hard-working 10 years at Keele.

Barclays is hoping to improve its **standing** among customers by extending the service it offers on Saturdays.

Their track record on capital expenditure has not been good.

character 5	rating	reputation	stature 2
credentials 1	record	standing	track record

44 THE 'KIND' GROUP

These nouns refer to a category or group.

Like most of **his generation**, he was unenthusiastic about the advance of commercialism.

That was the start of what I believe to be the biggest collection of **its kind** anywhere in the world.

class	kind	sex
generation	league 3	
ilk	like	

45 THE 'HOME' GROUP

These nouns refer to places.

The ignominious failure of the Europeans to resolve the crisis in **their own backyard** rankles, especially with Britain's Foreign Office and the French.

Mr Thompson was by **his wife's bedside** when she died.

It would be a way of preserving animals that are dying out because **their habitat** is being destroyed.

Shelley returned from London to **her home** in Tinsill, Leeds.

'Where's Major Rodenko?' 'He's in **his quarters**, sir.'

It seemed to me obvious that no country would voluntarily give away any of **its territory**.

airspace	domain 2	land 2	room
alma mater	domicile	local 3	shores
area 2	environment	manor 2	sickbed
backyard 2	feeding ground	mother country	solar system
base 9	habitat	nest	stamping ground
bedside	hangout	pad 5	starting point
club 2	haunt	perch	surroundings
colony	home	personal space	territory 1,4
court 1,4	homeland	place 7,13,14	town house
deathbed	hometown	post 2,3	turf 3
den	house	quarters	
dinner table	lair	resting place 2	

46 THE 'DOMAIN' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's area of work, influence, or responsibility.

Of course, no one thought to question that housework was still exclusively **the woman's domain**.

My field, politics, presents exceptionally clear examples.

ambit	field 5	niche 4	province 3
domain 1	line 25	orbit 3	territory 3

47 THE 'RESPONSIBILITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a responsibility, task, or role that someone or something has.

If I've had an uncustomary sort of marriage, that's **my business**, not yours.

We were only doing **our duty**.

The part of speech of a word depends on **its function** in a sentence.

It is **your responsibility** to ensure that you obtain all vaccinations and inoculations appropriate for the holiday.

My task was to advise companies how best to put their points of view across.

affair 8	caseload	duty	job 3
affairs 7	concern 10	fault 1	metier
business 6,8	department 2	function	mission 4

part 1,7	responsibilities 3	rounds 2,7	use 3,5
purpose	responsibility 1	task	work
remit	role 1	treat 6	workload

48 THE 'TURN' GROUP

These nouns refer to the duty or chance to do something.

Then, when it was **Aboriginal artist Fiona Foley's turn** to speak, she could barely contain her indignation.

go 9 service 15 turn 25

49 THE 'CHILDHOOD' GROUP

These nouns refer to a period of time, especially a period of time when someone is a particular age or has a particular role. With some of these nouns, the noun is usually or sometimes followed by an adverb or a prepositional phrase.

She spent her **childhood** in Mexico and the US and went to art school in Chicago.

He has declared that he wants audiences to behave just as they would have done in **Shakespeare's day**.

Carter did not achieve anything like all the reforms he had hoped for during his **presidency**.

'The Marginal Man' has just completed its **run** at London's Courtyard Theatre.

I didn't particularly enjoy my **stint** here as Deputy Director.

boyhood	girlhood	old age	stint
captaincy	guardianship	premiership	teens
chairmanship	heyday	presidency	tenure
childhood	infancy	prime	term 6,7
day 3	leadership	reign	time 8,11
dotage	life	rule 5	years 8
editorship	lifetime	run 36	youth
engagement 3	mandate 3	school days	

50 THE 'DEBUT' AND 'DEMISE' GROUP

These nouns refer to events or points in someone's life or in the history of something, especially a beginning, end, or change. With some of these nouns, the noun is usually or sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase.

It's my **birthday** today.

Miss Harwood made her **debut** in 1960 in a Glyndebourne production of Mozart's 'The Magic Flute.'

In just over a hundred pages Bertil Lintner takes us through the history of the party from its founding in 1939 to its **demise** exactly fifty years later.

He says he has not allowed himself to be bitter over his **departure** from the company.

'I was between the ages of 11 and 13 when the space programme was at its **height**,' Hanks said.

The return of the Conservatives to office in 1951 was the true start of **Sir Alec's rise** to power.

accession	ascension	coming of age	departure 2
anniversary	ascent 4	death	descent 3
apogee	birth 2	debut	disappearance
apotheosis	birthday	decline	doom
arrival 2,3,6	comeuppance	demise	downfall 1

end 17	height 5	passage 6	success 3
fall 17,6	inception	passing 2,3	wedding
fate 2	majority 4	peak	zenith
genesis	nadir	reappearance	
graduation	nuptials	rise 20	
growth 2,4	ordeal	silver wedding	

51 THE 'LUNCH BREAK' GROUP

These nouns refer to times when someone is not working.

He trains in his **lunch break** or after work.

hols	lunch hour
lunch break	spare time

52 THE 'BELONGINGS' GROUP

These nouns refer generally to someone's money, possessions, or rights.

They confiscated our **belongings**.

In his will, he clearly stated that he wished his own flesh and blood to inherit his vast **fortune**.

It is part of our **heritage**, as great and as old an institution as Parliament itself.

All we want to do is defend our **rights**.

Some prize-winners promptly spend their **winnings**, especially if they win one of the many small prizes.

accountretnent (usu plural)	expenses	possession (usu plural)	stock 2
allowance	fortune	prerogative	stuff
belongings	gear	privilege	things
budget	heritage	profits	turnover
deposit 4	inheritance	property	winnings
effects 3	pay cheque	revenue	
empire 2	pay packet	riches	
estate 3	perks	rights	

53 THE 'STOCK GROUP

These nouns refer to things that someone has available for their use.

You must arm yourself with the best weapons in your **armoury** if you really want to get the job. It predicted that by 1991 the world's **stocks** of mercury, tin, zinc, copper and lead would all be gone.

Written exercises will expand your **vocabulary** as well as your knowledge of grammatical structures.

armoury	lexicon	stash
arsenal	repertoire	stock 6
coffers	reserves 3	vocabulary

54 THE 'SHARE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a share of something.

Jones received £1,600 for his role after his business advisers took **their cut**.

He claimed Universal was defrauding him of his **share** of the profits.

cut 17 holding	market share share	whack 2
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55 THE 'PAPERS' GROUP

These nouns refer to official documents.

Here's my card. You may need me.

A bossy major asked for our papers and ordered us to leave town.

Ensure your passport is valid.

business card card 6	credentials 2 documents	driver's licence papers 4,5	passport visa
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56 THE 'WARDROBE' GROUP

These nouns refer to clothing. All nouns referring to clothes are often preceded by a possessive; the ones listed here are those that always or usually have a possessive. We include here pocket, which is part of someone's clothing.

He quickly delved into his pocket and produced a US banknote.

Rethink your wardrobe, hair and make-up.

kit 2 pocket	Sunday best wardrobe 2
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57 THE 'SPECIALITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to the best or most important thing that someone has or the thing they can do best.

Its flagship, the Radio Times, is still the biggest-selling magazine in the country.

Conducted tours are our speciality.

crown jewel 2 flagship 2 forte	major 4 party piece showpiece	speciality
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58 THE 'FAVOURITE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's favourite or preferred thing. *Bête noire* refers to someone's least favourite thing.

Pine Springs mineral water is my favourite.

Her voice, as so often when talking about her hero, falls to a rapt whisper.

The Lake District is a walker's paradise.

He said that since boats became his passion, he had not given a second thought to his old banking life.

bête noire	favourite	lifeblood	prayer 3
bible 3	hero 3	love 8	pride and joy
blue eyed boy	heroine 3	mecca 2	wet dream 2
choice 2	ideal	paradise 3	wish list
dream 6	idol 1	passion 3	

59 THE 'REQUIREMENTS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the things that someone likes or wants.

They can't supply our order.

They have to demonstrate they can meet our requirements on an ongoing basis.

likes needs	order 2,7 requirements	wants
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THE 'GRASP' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone holding or having power over someone or something.

She no longer needed the sect but once you are in their clutches it is very difficult to get away.

His efforts went disastrously wrong as he let the ball slip from his grasp.

claws 7	grip 2,3	tentacles 2
clutches 2	hold 1,2,3,3	
grasp 2,3	power 1	

61 THE 'PATH' GROUP

These nouns refer to the line in which someone or something moves.

The lava annihilates everything in its path, burning trees and scattering undergrowth.

The longer the club, the lower the ball's trajectory.

Ahead, a wire mesh fence barred her way.

orbit	trajectory	way 11,14,15,16,17,18
path 2,3,5	wake	

62 THE 'VIEW' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's ability to see in a particular direction.

He stopped in the doorway, blocking her view.

line of sight	line of vision	view 5
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63 THE 'MAJESTY' GROUP

These nouns are used when formally addressing or referring to an important person. They are always preceded by a possessive determiner. (See also Section 11, meaning group 6.)

Your Honour, I have something to say.

Their Majesties mounted the memorial monument to mingle with spectators.

Eminence	Highness	Ladyship	Royal Highness
Excellency	Holiness	Lordship	
Grace	Honour	Majesty	

64 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

The Princess Royal's **biographer**, John Parker, describes her as being 'a solo performer on her own public stage'.

'Our main **concern** is that more and more animals are being exported for slaughter,' he said. They started tugging at the bag, which burst open, spilling its **contents** over the gravel drive. This is an opportune time for both parties to get together and resolve their **differences**. Every few yards, she'd step on a loose stone or stumble against her own boots and lose her **footing**.

The rest of Western Europe has humbly followed their **lead**.

He lived at Quebec House only until the age of 11 but it has been turned into a shrine to his **memory**.

But in 1987, his contract was terminated at a **month's notice**.

Witness the thrill of the hunt as a leopard stalks, kills and drags its **prey** into the branches of a nearby tree.

Security has got to be our **watchword**.

ABC 2	corollary	likeness 2	side 14
aftermath	cue 1	limits 1	son 2
alter ego 2	defence 8	loss 3	source 3
answer 12	differences 3	mascot	stock-in-trade
beauty sleep	finals 7	memory 4	style 1
best 4	fix 20	motto	subject 5
billing 7	footing 4	notice 3	syndrome 2
biographer	grace 4	prey 1,3	technique 1
bona fides	hand 1,2,1,7	raison d'être	theme 2
bounty 1	hard luck 2	scalp 4	time 46
bread and butter 1	hit list 1	schooling	upkeep 1,2
bulk 1	interlocutor 1	secrets 4	utmost 2
circulation 1	keep 14	services 7	watchword
concern 3,5	law 7	shackles 2	youth 4
contents 1	lead 1,6,9	shell 5	

16 adj N

The noun is preceded by an adjective.

	adjective	Noun
a	rare	creature
a	good	listener
a	huge	margin
	British	soil
the	west	wing

Most nouns sometimes have an adjective in front of them. The nouns listed here are always or typically preceded by an adjective.

In the lists below, we often give an adjective in brackets after the noun. This is an adjective that typically occurs before the noun. Many other adjectives are often used as well.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'CITIZEN' AND 'TERRITORY' GROUPS
- 2 THE 'BACKGROUND' GROUP
- 3 THE 'COOK' GROUP
- 4 THE 'JOB' GROUP
- 5 THE 'BUY' GROUP
- 6 THE 'MATCH' GROUP
- 7 THE 'TURNOUT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'QUALITIES' GROUP
- 9 THE 'HAIR' AND 'HEART' GROUPS
- 10 THE 'MOOD' GROUP
- 11 THE 'PLACE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'SPECIMEN' GROUP
- 13 THE 'DECK' GROUP
- 14 THE 'GLAND' GROUP
- 15 THE 'ARENA' GROUP
- 16 THE 'POWER' GROUP
- 17 THE 'MANNER' GROUP
- 18 THE 'ERA' GROUP
- 19 THE 'GLORIES' GROUP
- 20 THE 'TYPE' GROUP
- 21 THE 'LANGUAGE' GROUP
- 22 THE 'PERSPECTIVE' GROUP
- 23 THE 'TIME BOMB' GROUP
- 24 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'CITIZEN' AND 'TERRITORY' GROUPS

These nouns all refer to someone or something belonging to or connected with a particular country. The adjective always indicates the country involved. They can be divided into three groups.

(i) The 'citizen' group

These nouns refer to people or groups of people.

The honour was presented to Sir Michael in London yesterday by the **Dutch Ambassador**.

Two **British citizens** have been sentenced to ten years imprisonment for drug smuggling in the Indian capital of Delhi.

The **American contingent** will stay overnight in London and fly to North Carolina tomorrow.

Counterpart is usually used with a **possessive**.

He said the Bosnian prime minister, Haris Silajdzic, would meet his **French counterpart**, Alain Juppe, in Paris today.

ambassador	envoy	legation	peacekeeper
citizen	forces 14	manhood 3	subject
consul	high command	minister	
contingent 2	High Commissioner	national	
counterpart	Jewry	patriot	

(ii) The 'territory' group

These nouns refer to places.

You are flying illegally in **Ukrainian airspace**.

Outside the **Japanese consulate** in Bangkok, a line of people stretches for blocks.
The plan also insists that Croatia and Serbia give up any claim to **Bosnian territory**.

airspace	empire 1	resort	waters 2
colony	enclave	soil 2	
consulate	High Commission	territorial waters	
embassy	possession 3	territory 1	

(iii) Other nouns

There are a number of other nouns in this group, for example nouns referring to organizations and ideas.

In the **European Championship**, Italy beat Cyprus four-nil in Limassol.
In 1989, the firm was bought by a **British conglomerate** that promptly collapsed.
It's a rustic informal restaurant serving traditional **French cuisine** and homemade fresh pasta.
Boris Yeltsin's combination of **Russian nationalism** and popular appeal apparently proved decisive.

championship	cuisine	mentality	unity
character 3	flag 3	model 2	way of life
citizenship	fleet	nationalism	yoke 1
conglomerate	interests 6	rule 5	
consciousness 2	invasion	society 2	
cooking	market 2	speciality	

2 THE 'BACKGROUND' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the nationality, class, or religion of someone's parents or ancestors.

There are now about 750,000 citizens of **Chinese ancestry** throughout Canada.
My **Catholic background** has helped get me through, but my faith has changed a lot.
He wove a fantasy – which he encouraged others to believe – that he was of **noble birth**.

ancestry	birth 3	descent 4	parentage
background	blood 2	extraction	stock 8
beginnings 5	bloodline	origin 2	upbringing

There is also one noun, *derivation*, which is used to indicate the origin of a word.

Words of **Latin, Germanic, and French derivation** abound in English.

3 THE 'COOK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a person or thing that does something. The adjective indicates, for example, how well they do it, or to what extent.

Was your mother a **good cook**?
When I was young I was a rather **fussy eater**.
Genes provide a more **reliable indicator** of the relation between groups of people than outward appearance can.
I think the book will be a **big seller**.
I let myself in quietly because I do not want to disturb my mother. She is a **light sleeper**.

The **big spenders** of the Eighties are now admitting that their parents were right about not spending money you didn't have.

attender	eater	operator 4	server 1
believer	flyer 2	orator	shot 3
bidder	gainer	payer 2	sleeper
conversationalist	hitter 2	performer 2	speller
cook 4	horseman	predictor	sponder
dancer 2	indicator 1	puncher	tactician
debater	jumper 3	reader 2	talker
draughtsman 2	leveller	riser 1	taskmaster
dresser 4	listener 2	scholar 2	timekeeper 2
earner 1	mover	seller 3	worker 3

There is also one noun, *eyesight*, which refers to the ability of someone to do something.

His **poor eyesight** meant that he had to wear spectacles from the age of six.

4 THE 'JOB' GROUP

These nouns refer to tasks or things that are done. The adjective indicates how well the thing is done.

Between us I reckon we did a **good job** and the customer was pleased too.
'To my mind, nobody else since Joe has displayed such **perfect timing**,' he said.

job 4	timing	workmanship
timekeeping	work 7	

5 THE 'BUY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate whether something is good or easy to deal with, or whether you should get involved with it.

Top quality works by artists such as Matisse and Picasso will always be a **good buy**.
Perhaps gold would be a **wise investment** as the century ends.
It's a **compelling read** and a fascinating insight into life and the theatre in Elizabethan times.

buy	pickings	risk 4
investment 3	proposition 1	
lay 10	read 7	

6 THE 'MATCH' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate whether or not one thing is like another.

We believe the picture is a **good likeness** and are hoping someone will recognise this man.
A third test has to be done to find out if the donor is a **good match**.

fit	match
likeness	resemblance

7 THE 'TURNOUT' GROUP

These nouns refer to things whose size or intensity is important.

It was widely felt he was heading for even **greater heights**.

He was democratically elected by a **substantial majority**.
 This would be a strategic misjudgment of **epic proportions**.
 The global population is increasing at a **faster rate** than in any previous decade.
 'Will they give you a **big send-off**?' He laughed. 'Hardly.'
 He's counting on a **massive turnout** among black voters.

acclaim	effect	pace 1,2	turnout
appeal 7	entry 6	proportions 4	turnover 2
bombardment	following 4	rate 1,3	walk 3
calibre 3	gradient	readership	wavelength 1
competition 1,3	heights 7	repertoire	way 24,25
concern 11	helping	send-off	while
degree 1	majority 2	stature 1	workload
dose 2	margin 1	stint	
drain 10	number 2	strides 4	

8 THE 'QUALITIES' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating a quality that someone or something has.

The small port of San Felipe had a **festive air**.
 This blue vein cheese has a **strong flavour** and a **crumbly texture**.
 Inevitably, however, Mr Blewett's visit has **political overtones**.
 Their mother, Julie Hansford, said her former husband had many **special qualities** as a father and a friend.
 The scenario has a **familiar ring**.

aftertaste	consistency 2	note 8	texture
air 5	feel 3,15	overtones	touch 15
aroma	flavour 1,4	qualities 3	undercurrent 1
aspect 3	fragrance	quality 4	undertone 2
atmosphere 3	front 9	ring 6	undertow 1
character 2	guise	streak 3	veneer 1
complexion 2	lines 17	subtext	
connotation	nature 2	taste	

9 THE 'HAIR' AND 'HEART' GROUPS

These nouns are all used to indicate features or characteristics of people. They can be divided into two groups.

(i) The 'hair' group

These nouns refer to physical characteristics and types of voice. This is a productive use: any noun referring to a part of the body can be used with this pattern.

I think she has a **lovely figure** and should be proud of her **small waist**.
 He had **brown hair** and wore a **grey shirt**.
 He was a **giant of a man**, with a **deep voice** that instantly commanded respect.

complexion	face	hair	tone
drawl	figure	locks	voice
eyes	grin	smile	

(ii) The 'heart' group

These nouns refer to someone's mental attitude, behaviour, talents, or characteristics.

Today's artists also possess considerable **financial acumen**.
 Both exhibits are labelled with signs stating that they are unsuitable for people of a **nervous disposition**.
 In short, under his **keen eye** everything was kept in perfect order.
 He seemed to enter the kitchen cautiously, with a slightly **unsteady gait**.
 She's got a **kind heart**.
 'D'you know, Andrew, you've a very **suspicious mind**,' she said.
 But, despite her moods and **sharp tongue**, Margaret inspires fierce loyalty from her friends.

acumen (political)	disposition (nervous)	mind 2 (good)
attitude 1 (bad/relaxed)	exterior 2 (tough)	mind 3 (suspicious)
behaviour 1 (good/bad)	eye 3 (keen/watchful)	mouth 2 (loud)
bent 5 (artistic)	gait (unsteady)	outlook 1 (positive)
calibre 1 (high)	heart 3 (generous)	personality (strong)
capabilities 1 (physical)	inclinations (artistic)	tongue 2 (sharp/quick)
character 5 (good)	mentality	

10 THE 'MOOD' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate someone's mood.

When you are in a **positive frame of mind**, you are better equipped to make decisions more wisely.
 He laughs loudly. He is clearly in a **good mood** today.

frame of mind	mood	temper 2
humour 4	state of mind	

11 THE 'PLACE' GROUP

These nouns refer to places.

Tempted to pack up your house and disappear to **sunnier climes**?
 The tribe lives in **mountainous country**, covered by tropical rain forest.
 This is a **nice place** to live and work.
 The Hotel is in an exceptionally **beautiful setting** right on the bend of the River Tamar.
 The problem is universal in the **Western world**.

clime (usu plural)	heartland	setting 1	wasteland
coast	land 5	situation 2	wonderland 2
country 4	location 1	spot 5	world 4
fastness	outpost	terrain	
ground 4	place 1,3	territory 5	
habitat	retreat 4	waste 7	

12 THE 'SPECIMEN' GROUP

These nouns are used when describing or expressing an opinion of someone or something.

They're a **great bunch** of girls.

Running two homes is a costly **business**.

He's an **odd character**, I warn you, distinctly odd.

'Inevitably there are people who are going to hate you and think you are a **smug git**,' he says.

There are **suspicions** that the country has been developing biological weapons, which would be a very **worrying prospect**.

When Henry remarked what fine **specimens** the apples were, George told him they had been picked from a tree in the Reverend's orchard.

Oh, you **lucky thing**!

'Would you like to move into the ward?' 'A **kind thought**, but no, thank you.'

affair 3,4	creature 2	lot 5	specimen 4
bastard 2	customer 2	mite 3	spirit 10
beast 4	deal 4	monkey 2	state of affairs
brew 2,4	dodge 3	oaf	stuff 1
bugger 1	enterprise 2	ploy	substance
bunch 1	experience 3	prospect 2	task
business 9,10	feeling 1,6	rogue 2	thing 1,12
case 3	find 12	scene 3	thought 7
character 4	git	sensation 1,3	type 3
construction 4	hole 5	sight 3	wheeze 2
creation 3	idea	soul 3	

13 THE 'DECK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a part of a place, organization, or thing.

Perhaps he believed she would take one look at the dry plain beyond the coastal **belt** and give up.

The nearby streets, filmed from the top **deck** of a London bus, are devoid of parking restrictions or one-way systems.

Britain is the biggest sheep producer in the northern **hemisphere**, supplying huge demand in France and the rest of Europe.

The scales that make up the outer **layer** of each strand become dry and no longer lie flat.

Lake Guerledan is a reservoir on the **upper reaches** of the Blavet river.

These include the Communist Party General Secretary, Joe Slovo, who was a former head of the military **wing** of the ANC.

belt 3	end 13	part	rung 3
branch 3	face 1,3	plane 4	section
deck	hemisphere	quadrant	sector 3
division 5,6	lane 2	quarter 7,8	storey
echelon	layer	reaches	stream 10
elevation 1	lobe 2	region	wing 3,4,6

14 THE 'GLAND' GROUP

These nouns refer to parts of the body.

It lubricates the inside walls of the alimentary **canal**, making it possible for food to pass through easily.

These hormones are controlled by the **pituitary gland** in your brain.

canal 2	passage 3 (usu plural)	tract 3
gland	system 5	

15 THE 'ARENA' GROUP

These nouns are used to refer to a particular field of activity. Apart from circles, they usually come after the.

He said the attack was a price Mr Rudd had to pay for entering the **political arena**.

Amis was not much admired in **academic circles** where he was seen as having committed several vulgar errors.

And the resultant statistics are, as a consequence, kept out of the **public domain**.

Vacancies for temporary staff in the **medical field** are increasing dramatically.

He knows the **international scene** both as player and manager.

arena 2	field 5	milieu	sector 1
circles 8	firmament 2	realm 1	stage 6
domain 1	forum 1	scene 5	world 6

16 THE 'POWER' GROUP

These nouns are used to refer to something or someone important.

He was a **key figure** in the US peace team in former Yugoslavia.

Nationalism has been a **powerful force** in Scotland for more than 20 years.

William Robinson, one of the **great names** in the history of English gardening, was a man of natural, wide-ranging taste.

This is a **central plank** in the BSP's new election manifesto.

It had proved that a **major power** could be defeated by a small group of committed fighters using guerrilla tactics.

attribute	exponent 2	hurdle 1	plank 2
consideration 4	figure 7	label 5	player 3
element 1,2	force 8	name 8	power 6

17 THE 'MANNER' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the way in which something is done.

Mrs. Duquesnay smiled in a **friendly manner**, but Mr. Duquesnay sat silently in his wheelchair, looking frightened and confused.

Sarah Grant and Cranswick Amadou won the Novice Championship in **fine style**.

It functions in a **similar way** to the human brain.

fashion	style	vein 2
manner	touch 16	way

18 THE 'ERA' GROUP

These nouns refer to periods of time.

I take pride in the way Europe is moving into this **new era** of freedom.

In **Victorian times** these beautiful flowers were displayed on tiered staging.

chapter 2	era	times 8
epoch	period 2	

19 THE 'GLORIES' GROUP

These nouns are used to refer to something in the past.

But is this apparent return to form merely a nostalgic reflection of **past glories**?

'You're your **old self** again,' I said to him, delighted.

glories 2 self 1 ways 5

20 THE 'TYPE' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating someone's interests.

I am not a **political animal**.

He wasn't a **gambling man**, despised those who were.

Powerful female characters like Eustacia Vye will, I'm sure, appeal to the **viewing public**.

Camping is fine if you're the **outdoor type** and are experienced in pitching a tent and cooking over a camping stove.

animal 7 person 4 type 3
man 3 public 2 woman 3

21 THE 'LANGUAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of expressing or writing something.

If we can explain clearly and in **simple language** what we are doing and why, we will have achieved a great step forward.

Killing an enemy's leaders, a strategy known in contemporary **military parlance** as decapitation, was an ambition as old as warfare itself.

The surface is inscribed with a text in the Malay language but written in **Arabic script**.

The **medical term** for heart attack is 'myocardial infarction'.

argot lettering parlance term
jargon lingo 2 script 3 terminology
language 5 notation system 6 word

22 THE 'PERSPECTIVE' GROUP

These nouns are used to refer to a particular point of view or way of thinking about something.

Edel says the experience also made her more self-reliant and given her a **new perspective** on life.

He has proved that the militarists' arguments do not hold water from an **economic standpoint**.

angle 4 perspective standpoint viewpoint
approach 5 point of view take 42
attitude 1 slant 4 view 2

23 THE 'TIME BOMB' GROUP

These nouns are used metaphorically. The adjective usually indicates what sort of thing is in fact being talked about.

Others had pointed to the **moral bankruptcy** of capitalism.

If the regional touring theatre companies also begin to go under, a large area of this country will be well on the way to becoming a **cultural desert**.

Creating the wrong impression could potentially inhibit your climb up the **corporate ladder**. It's a **political time bomb** that could cost the government the next election.

backwater 2 frontier 3 machine 3 suicide 2
baggage 2 ground 9 mecca 2 territory 3
bankruptcy 3 gymnastics 3 meltdown 2 time bomb 2
blueprint 3 hat 2 minefield 2 umbrella 3
climate 2 journey 2 numbness 2 vacuum 1
desert 2 ladder 2 purse 3 wasteland 2
footwork 2 landscape 2 shackles 2 waters 3

24 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are many other nouns which are often preceded by an adjective. They can be divided into two groups.

(i) Nouns used with descriptive adjectives

The glamour of the previous night's ball was put aside with guests choosing more **casual attire** for the morning event.

If your clothes are in very **good condition**, you can sell them through Good As New shops.

Embarrassed, he slung her over his shoulder and made a **hasty exit**.

Liz gave him a **sharp look**.

The panel awarded it fairly **low marks** on all counts, including, despite its bargain price, value for money.

I don't have a **high opinion** of my own work.

But his suggestion has been given a **cool reception** by NATO leaders.

When its larger Sierra model was launched in 1982, its **aerodynamic styling** was heavily criticised for being too radical.

I had a **great time**, I really enjoyed myself out there.

She had heard the creak of his **heavy tread** as he moved around the bedroom, but now there was silence.

addition 2 (welcome) existence 2 (miserable) line 20 (hard)
attire (colourful) exit 3 (hasty) living 2 (healthy)
billing 2 (top) face 6 (acceptable/ugly) look 1-4 (blank/sharp)
bit 6 (the best) fix 6 (quick) mark 5 (good)
brim (wide) footwork 1 (nifty) marks 6 (top/low)
calm 8 (dead) form 12 (good/poor) memory 2 (happy)
campaigner (seasoned) garb (colourful) mind 4 (great)
carapace 2 (protective) goodbye 2 (final) neckline (plunging)
circumstances 1 (happier) grade 2,3 (good) offer 8 (special)
circumstances 2 (terrible) grasp 5 (firm) operation 1 (big)
condition 1 (good/bad) grave 2 (early) opinion 2 (high/low)
conditions 2 (ideal) ground 8 (fertile) patch 1 (damp)
conduct 4 (unprofessional) happening (strange) picture 9 (true)
conscience 1 (guilty/clear) haunt (popular) pointer 1 (useful)
consequences 1 (serious) hint 3 (helpful) position 7 (difficult)
construction 5 (robust) influence 5 (good/bad) position 8 (moderate)
death 2 (horrible) labour 4 (skilled) posture 2 (defensive)
end 17 (violent) lapse 1 (momentary) rank 2 (high/low)
ending 1 (happy) legacy 2 (enduring) reaction 1 (strong)
environment 2 (safe) lifestyle (healthy) reception 3 (cool)

record 9 (good)	stance 1 (neutral)	tool 2 (powerful)
relationship 1 (friendly)	stance 2 (relaxed)	track record (good)
reputation 2 (good)	state 7 (awful)	trajectory 2 (upward)
self-image (positive/poor)	stream 2,3,4 (steady)	tread 3 (heavy)
send-off (good)	styling 1 (sleek)	turn 19 (new)
sheen (silvery)	survey 4 (brief)	view 1 (interesting)
signing 2 (new)	thing 3,8	write-up (good)
situation 1 (hopeless)	tidings (glad/bad)	
sound 4 (unique)	time 10 (good)	

(ii) Nouns used with classifying adjectives

There are a number of **military bases** in the vicinity.

She worries, too, that certain attitudes within the **black community** might make matters worse.

Are they not trying simply to talk up the market for their own **commercial ends**?

Right now we don't know how they would behave in a strong **gravitational field**.

He is also close to the New York **intellectual heavyweight**, Senator Patrick Moynihan.

This assault on our **cultural identity** had gone too far.

It also, says the **environmental lobby**, has a potential to inflict environmental damage on an unprecedented scale.

He had shown signs of being a **musical prodigy**, giving his first piano recital in his home city at the age of nine.

In June last year he got Cabinet to approve in principle a set of reforms of the **legal profession**.

Mr. Edwards taught **social studies**.

abuse 1 (physical)	capability 2 (military)	enrichment (personal)
academy 1 (naval)	centre 2 (industrial)	enterprise 1 (industrial)
acclaim (critical)	champion 1 (world)	enterprise 3 (private)
advancement (social)	channel 2 (diplomatic)	ephemera 2 (Victorian)
adviser (financial)	charter 1 (social)	equinox (vernal)
affairs 6 (internal)	church 2 (Catholic)	establishment 2 (medical)
agitator (political)	circuit 2 (international)	ethic 4 (corporate)
aid 1 (humanitarian)	colony 2 (industrial)	event 2 (social)
aspect 1 (financial)	command 5 (supreme)	exchange 5 (cultural)
aspect 2 (south-west)	commentary 3 (social)	extravaganza (musical)
assistance 3 (economic)	commentator 2 (political)	fabric 2 (social)
attaché (cultural)	community 2 (scientific)	facility 1 (recreational)
attire (formal)	consciousness 3 (political)	faith 2 (Protestant)
attribute 4 (physical)	consideration 4 (political)	feeling 9 (anti-Fascist)
awakening 1 (sexual)	constraint 1 (financial)	fervour (religious)
award (literary)	consultant 2 (financial)	field 4 (electrical)
backbencher (Tory)	consumption 2 (human)	figure 10 (five-sided)
backlash (political)	context 1 (cultural)	footing 1,2 (equal)
base 6 (economic)	costume 2 (national)	framework 1 (conceptual)
base 8 (naval)	crusader 1 (environmental)	fraternity 2 (criminal)
basis (equal)	cycle 4 (economic)	frontbencher (Tory)
bastion (conservative)	deprivation (social)	gadgetry (electronic)
beliefs 2 (religious)	determinism (historical)	grade 4 (junior)
belt 6 (black)	dimension 1 (political)	greats 5 (musical)
beverage (alcoholic)	disorder 1 (genetic)	group 2 (environmental)
biology 2 (human)	disorder 3 (civil)	group 3 (racial)
body 4 (regulatory)	disturbance 3 (mental)	grouping (political)
bombardment (aerial)	divide 6 (racial)	growth 4 (intellectual)
breakdown 2 (mental)	eclipse 1 (solar)	hack 5 (political)
breakfast 2 (cooked)	editor 2,4 (literary)	harassment (sexual)
calendar 2 (Christian)	element 3 (criminal)	hardware 2 (military)
campaigner (environmental)	ends 15 (commercial)	haze 3 (alcoholic)

heavyweight 2 (political)	norms 3 (international)	set 1,5 (smart)
high ground 1 (moral)	occasion 2 (special)	side 18 (funny)
hub 1 (financial)	order 3,1 (alphabetical)	snob 2 (intellectual)
icon 1 (cultural)	order 3,4 (new)	source 3 (diplomatic)
identity 2 (cultural)	orientation 2 (sexual)	spectrum 2 (political)
idiom 1 (local)	outlook 2 (economic)	standards 2 (international)
impairment (visual)	overload 2 (sensory)	status 4 (marital)
imperative 2 (moral)	party 5 (guilty)	status 5 (financial)
installation (nuclear)	persuasion 2 (political)	stimulation 2 (mental)
instruction 2 (formal)	planner (financial)	stimulation 3 (physical)
instrument 2,3 (musical)	platform 5 (winning)	stricture 2 (financial)
integration 2 (economic)	plea 2 (guilty)	strike 8 (military)
intercourse 2 (social)	population 2 (male)	stringency (financial)
juices 3 (digestive)	position 2 (sitting)	structure 2 (federal)
law 2 (criminal)	posting (overseas)	studies 4 (cultural)
league 3 (same)	practice 3 (medical)	subculture (gay)
life 6 (personal)	presence 4 (military)	supremo (military)
life 9 (political)	principle 1 (moral)	system 1 (legal)
line 29 (male)	principle 3 (scientific)	takeover 2 (military)
living 2 (urban)	prodigy (musical)	tendency 1 (separatist)
lobby 2 (environmental)	profession 2 (medical)	tendency 2 (suicidal)
logic 3 (commercial)	purposes 1 (medicinal)	therapy 2 (alternative)
lore (local)	pursuit 5 (cultural)	things 15
make-up 3 (chemical)	quirk 1 (statistical)	thoroughfare (main)
matter 6 (waste)	regime 1 (old)	ticket 4 (Republican)
means 1 (peaceful)	retardation (mental)	tipple (usual)
mentality (criminal)	revivalism (religious)	tone 9 (engaged)
mode 3 (automatic)	revolution 2 (industrial)	trait (genetic)
morass (economic)	riches 4 (natural)	upheaval (social)
mores (sexual)	rule 5 (civilian)	warfare 1,2 (chemical)
motion 2 (circular)	run 41 (usual)	watchdog (independent)
movement 1 (environmental)	seal 6 (royal)	wiles (feminine)
niceties (legal)	self 2 (inner)	wizard 2 (technical)
norms 1 (social)	sentiment 1 (nationalist)	world view (religious)

17 n N

The noun is preceded by another noun.

	n	N
a	pencil	sharpener
	chicken	soup
the	railway	station

Many nouns are sometimes preceded by nouns which indicate, for example, what something is made of (as in a **cardboard box**), where something is (as in a **hilltop village**), or when something happens (as in an **evening concert**). These productive noun-noun combinations are dealt with in Section 12.

The nouns listed here are ones which are always or typically preceded by another noun.

In the lists below, we often give a noun in brackets after the listed noun. This is a noun

that typically occurs before the listed noun. Other nouns may often be used as well.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'TRADER' GROUP
- 2 THE 'COLLECTOR' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SOUP' GROUP
- 4 THE 'BOTTLE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'OPENER' GROUP
- 6 THE 'LOTION' GROUP
- 7 THE 'CRYSTAL' GROUP
- 8 THE 'FACTORY' GROUP
- 9 THE 'SURFACE' GROUP
- 10 THE 'ADDICTION' GROUP
- 11 THE 'HUNTING' GROUP
- 12 THE 'SHORTAGE' GROUP
- 13 THE 'AGENCY' GROUP
- 14 THE 'INDUSTRY' GROUP
- 15 THE 'SEASON' GROUP
- 16 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'TRADER' GROUP

These nouns refer to people who have particular jobs. There are various kinds of relationships between the two nouns.

(i) The thing indicated by the first noun is directly affected by the person indicated by the second noun; for example, a *window cleaner* cleans windows; a *wood carver* carves wood. Usually there is a verb which relates to the second noun, as in *window cleaner*, but sometimes there is not, as in *landscape architect*; the relationship is very similar even when there is no related verb.

One man, a window cleaner aged 19, was arrested.

A baggage handler at New York's Kennedy Airport appeared in court yesterday on theft charges.

A maths master is quitting his job to set up a school without uniforms, teachers, or classrooms.

Mr Castelli, a flower seller from Bergamo, first arrived in the UK in March 1994.

He came to London via Cuba, where he was a sugar trader.

architect 2 (landscape)	exporter (grain)	planner (town)
breeder (racehorse)	grower (apple)	repairman
carver	handler 1 (dog)	restorer
catcher 2 (rat)	handler 2 (baggage)	salesman
cleaner 2	instructor	seller
coach 3	manufacturer	teacher
collector (refuse)	master 7 (maths)	trader
co-ordinator (campaign)	mistress 2 (maths)	vendor
developer 2 (property)	operator 2 (computer)	
distributor	picker (fruit)	

(ii) The first noun refers to the place where the person indicated by the second noun works, or the institution in which they work. For example, a *car-park attendant* works in a car-park, and an *army chaplain* works in the army.

He scored 68 goals in 123 games and was made club captain.

At 8.30pm, a UN official arrived to tell the crowd what was happening around them.

In 1993, only one Japanese office worker in ten had a personal computer on his desk.

artiste (cabaret)	chaplain	ombudsman
assistant 3 (shop)	chief 1	source 3 (government)
attendant 1 (car-park)	commissioner (police)	spokesman
captain 1 (army)	hand 1.5 (farm/mill)	spokesperson
captain 2 (club)	High Commissioner (UN)	spokeswoman
captain 3 (sea)	official (UN)	worker (office)

(iii) The first noun refers to the subject area in which the person indicated by the second noun works. For example, a *defence minister* works in the area of defence.

The former England cricket captain and chairman of selectors is also an outstanding golfer.

Ron started out as a radio sports commentator in Des Moines, Iowa.

Independent management consultant and trainer John Langford has a keen interest in gender issues in the workplace.

Last night the chief education officer of Waltham Forest was meeting the chief inspector of schools.

attaché (press)	counsel 4 (defence)	rep 1 (sales/travel)
captain 2 (cricket)	crew 2 (film/ambulance)	rep 2 (health and safety)
commentator 1 (sports)	editor 2,4 (sports)	secretary 4 (defence)
consultant 2	minister 1 (defence)	
contractor	officer 2 (liaison)	

2 THE 'COLLECTOR' GROUP

These nouns all refer to people. The first noun tells you more about the person concerned; there is a wide variety of relationships between the first and second nouns.

(i) The thing indicated by the first noun is directly affected by the person indicated by the second noun; for example, a *stamp collector* collects stamps; a *blood donor* donates blood. We include here *sufferer*, where the first noun indicates an illness that affects the person indicated by the second noun.

In his more radical past he was dubbed a police-basher for his repeated highlighting of police brutality cases.

It was about a hugely rich international art collector who did not want to publish his name for security reasons.

Sue Smith is The Courier-Mail's art critic.

Is it true that being a blood donor will help you to live a longer life?

I've just been called a woman-hater, which I'm sure will come as a surprise to my mother, my sister and my girlfriend.

A US consular official confirmed that the dead man was an American passport holder, of Palestinian origin.

He was the best Russian speaker in the embassy and was therefore often roped in as interpreter.

Nikki, a cystic fibrosis sufferer, is feeling considerably better in the unpolluted environment.

advocate 4	drinker 1 (beer)	hunter 2	peddler 2 (drugs)
-basher	earner 1 (wage)	leader 1 (party)	player 1 (football)
bearer 2 (flag)	eater (meat)	maker 1 (car)	robber (bank)
collector 1,2	gatherer	maker 2 (programme)	runner 3 (drug)
critic 1 (film)	giver	monitor 5 (human rights)	rustler (cattle)
dodger	-hater	owner	seeker (truth)
donor 1	holder 1 (record)	payer (tax)	snatcher < 2 (bag)

speaker (French)	-taker (decision)	wannabe
-spotter (train)	trafficker (drugs)	-watcher
sufferer (asthma)	user (drug/computer)	wearer

(ii) The first noun refers to the place or institution connected in some way with the person indicated by the second noun. For example, an *inner city resident* resides in the inner city.

Lisa Opie beat the world **champion** Susan Devoy yesterday, helping England to a 3-0 victory over New Zealand.

He was described as 'a regular **church-goer** who believes in strong family values'.

I'm a **Vietnam vet**, I've been in combat, and I know what this sound was. It was a missile exploding.

champion	entrant 1 (university)	graduate	resident
dweller (city)	-goer (church)	peacekeeper (UN)	vet 2 (Vietnam)

(iii) The first noun refers to the subject area with which the person indicated by the second noun is concerned. For example, a *human rights campaigner* is concerned with human rights.

Mr Clark and five former **business associates** face a total of 100 charges in connection with the affair.

During his recent visit to the United Nations in Geneva, **human rights campaigner** S. Maharasingham staged a symbolic fast in defence of the lives and rights of Tamil refugees.

It was time for Wally to hand the microphone over to a **talk show host** named Sandi Cousins.

Mr Abiola, in contrast, is a **shipping magnate**, publisher, and former vice-president of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation.

Hector is an **economics major** who is an editor of a student economics journal.

adviser (policy)	graduate (law)	magnate (shipping)
associate (business)	guru 1 (fashion)	major 3 (economics)
baron 2 (press)	host 6 (talk-show)	mogul (movie)
campaigner (human rights)	icon 1 (fashion)	supremo (arts)
crusader 1	idol 1 (screen)	
fetishist	kingpin (crime)	

(iv) The first noun indicates a subject area, and the second noun refers to a person who is very good at this subject or skilled in this area.

A bitter **feud** has broken out among the five children of former Spurs soccer **ace** Danny Blanchflower.

Casiraghi was killed defending his title of world **offshore racing champion**, when his boat hit a wave and somersaulted at speed.

Smith was not only a first-class painter but an archaeologist, architect and **explosives expert**.

He has studied the psychology of adventure education and the company has recruited Julie Allan, a children's **fitness specialist**, to give advice.

ace 2	cognoscenti	greats 5 (jazz)	star 4
blue 5 (rugby)	connoisseur	prodigy	whizz-kid
champion	expert 1	specialist	

(v) The first noun indicates a subject area, and the second noun refers to a person who is very enthusiastic about this subject.

Most customers, including the **balloon enthusiast** Richard Branson, are very happy with the service they receive.

Any **football fan** would be proud to wear the shirt of a great footballing nation like Holland. He remained a **tennis fanatic** to the end, watching Wimbledon on television from his hospital bed in Las Vegas.

addict 1 (heroin)	devotee	fiend 2	maniac 3
addict 2 (TV)	enthusiast	freak 2	nut 3
aficionado	fan	junkie 2	stalwart (party)
buff 2	fanatic 2	lover 2	supporter (football/Labour)

3 THE 'SOUP' GROUP

These nouns all refer to food and drink. The first noun refers to the main or only ingredient of something, as in *fish soup* and *apple juice*.

This is a very productive use – many more nouns referring to food and drink often have another noun before them. The nouns listed below represent a small sample.

I've put a **chicken casserole** in the oven.

About an hour later, one of the staff brought him a plate of **corned-beef hash** and a bottle of beer.

An old-fashioned English **fruit pie** is one of the nicest things I know.

The English eat **rice pudding** with jam.

Mom, I want a **peanut butter sandwich**.

My **tomato soup** with basil was fresh-tasting and lovely.

A shared drink of sweet mint **tea** may be offered as a friendly gesture.

bake 4	chaser	hash 2	sandwich
bar 6 (chocolate)	chowder	juice	soup
brownie 1	consommé	mixture 2 (egg)	spread 4 (cheese)
bun	crumble 5 (rhubarb)	oil 3 (olive)	stew
cake 1 (fruit)	dressing 1 (oil and lemon)	pie	sundae
cake 2 (fish/potato)	extract 9	pizza	tart
casserole 1	fritter	pudding	tea 2 (mint)

4 THE 'BOTTLE' GROUP

These nouns all refer to containers. The first noun usually refers to the thing which is or was in the container. The use of this pattern often implies that the container is empty.

This is a very productive use – many more nouns referring to containers often have another noun before them. The nouns listed below represent a small sample.

To combat falling blood donations, the **blood bank** will launch a new blood collection programme today.

He was accused of throwing three **milk bottles** at a police cordon.

Clear out your **medicine cabinet** and discard out-of-date lotions and potions.

She glanced at the almost empty **wine glass**, hoping he wouldn't think she had been drinking.

The photographers clustered round him at the finish like wasps round a **jam pot**.

The fuel warning light comes on when the 67-litre **fuel tank** drops to the 9-litre mark.

album 2	bin 2	bow1 3 (washing-up)	cabinet 1
bank 1.5 (blood/data)	bottle	box	can

canister	cup	jar	tank 1
capsule 3	dispenser	keg	tin 3 (biscuit)
carton	drum 2 (oil)	mill 2 (pepper)	tin 4 (baking)
case 1	glass	packet	urn 2 (tea)
churn	holder 2	pot 3 (paint/jam)	wrapper
container	hold 10	sleeve 2 (record)	

5 THE 'OPENER' GROUP

These nouns refer to tools and appliances. In most cases, the thing indicated by the first noun is directly affected by the thing indicated by the second noun; for example, an **egg beater** beats eggs; a **can opener** opens cans. There are a few exceptions: for example a **gas fire** or **gas cooker** burns gas as a fuel, and a **vacuum cleaner** cleans by creating a vacuum.

This is a productive use.

*Gradually add the cream to the bowl, whisking with a hand-operated **egg beater** as you do so.*

*This very quiet, in-home **air cleaner** eliminates 99.97 percent of all airborne contaminants, completely changing and refreshing the air in your room every 10 minutes.*

*What better way to warm up your living room than with a superb real flame **gas fire**.*

*Place the ingredients in a clean electric **coffee grinder** or any other type of **spice grinder**.*

*The **heart monitor** shows low levels of consciousness.*

*Is the electric **can opener** really that much of an improvement over the manual kind?*

*Use a 2B pencil for sketching and sharpen it with a knife, not a **pencil sharpener**.*

beater 1	detector	grinder	sharpener
cleaner 4 (air/vacuum)	dryer	monitor 3 (heart)	stick 3 (drum/lolly)
cooker	extractor (juice)	opener	stick 4 (hockey)
crusher	feeder 4 (bird)	pump 6	sweeper
cutter	fire 4 (gas)	purifier	tester 2
deck 3 (tape)	gauge 2	rig 2	torch 3 (welding)

6 THE 'LOTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to substances which have particular uses. The thing indicated by the first noun is directly affected by the substance indicated by the second noun. For example an **oven cleaner** is used to clean ovens.

This is a productive use.

*Using a fabric **conditioner** will make clothes easier to handle and iron.*

*She'd left a small bottle of **hand lotion** in his bathroom.*

cement 3 (tile)	conditioner 2	lotion	repellent
cleaner 3	enhancer	remover (paint)	suppressant

7 THE 'CRYSTAL' GROUP

These nouns refer to quantities or amounts. They can be divided into four groups:

(i) These nouns refer to a quantity of a substance and indicate the form that the substance has. The first noun refers to the substance concerned.

This is a productive use.

*Freezing winds sweep off the polar continent causing millimetre-sized **ice crystals** to form in the open sea.*

*The poodle had to be fed the best steaks and **chocolate drops**.*

*Many people have been forced to give up woodturning because of breathing problems caused by inhaling **wood dust**.*

*Tiramisu, the creamy mixture of **sponge fingers**, coffee and custard, has spread throughout Europe like wildfire.*

*Instant **coffee granules** can vary by up to 100 per cent in their content of caffeine.*

beam 2 (laser)	current 2 (air)	formation 4 (rock)	nugget
beam 4 (light)	drop 16 (chocolate)	frond (palm)	pellet
chip 4 (wood)	droplet	grain 1 (pollen)	rib 2 (pork)
chippings	dust 3	granule (coffee)	steak 3 (salmon)
chop 2	fillet	ingot	stick 1.5 (cinnamon)
crystal (ice)	finger 3 (sponge)	leg 3 (chicken)	tablet 1
cube 1 (ice/sugar)	flake	molecule (water)	

(ii) These nouns simply refer to an amount of a physical thing or a quantity of things, without indicating the form of the amount or quantity. The first noun indicates the thing or things involved.

*This is the first big **arms cache** found since the discovery of weapons in west Wales in November last year.*

*They have not been heard from since, and **food supplies** are running low.*

cache (arms)	haul 3 (drugs)	stocks 6
deposits 5 (mineral)	herd 1 (dairy)	supplies 2
fix 20 (caffeine)	reserve 3 (oil)	supply 3

(iii) These nouns refer to an amount of money. The first noun indicates what the money is or relates to.

*'Most people don't have enough money in their **pension fund** anyway,' she says.*

***Mortgage payments** are going up much faster than people's incomes.*

award 3 (pay)	payment 1 (mortgage)	surplus 3 (trade)
fund 2	rebate (tax)	surplus 4 (budget)

(iv) These nouns refer to an amount, level, or quality that can be measured or judged, or that is fixed.

*Smaller cars offer better mobility, convenience and **fuel economy**.*

*I had a **cholesterol level** of over 400.*

*Paul Ormerod argues that the rise in **oil prices** rules out a reduction in **interest rates**.*

*The space station is very expensive, yet the **satisfaction quotient** coming out of it's fairly low.*

*Washington's **murder toll** is 20 per cent up on last year's rate.*

*We are an average family (two teenage children, plus dog) and our annual **water usage** is less than 250 kilolitres a year.*

allowance 3 (tax)	content 5 (salt)	level 1 (cholesterol)	speed 1
allowance 4 (baggage)	economy 3 (fuel)	prices 1	range 2 (age)
band 7 (tax)	gap 4 (trade)	quotient	rate 2 (heart)
bracket 1 (income)	intake 1 (alcohol)	span 5 (wing)	rate 4 (interest)

rating 1 (approval)	span 1 (time)	tolerance 2 (drought)	usage 3 (phone)
resistance 4 (wind)	span 2 (attention)	toll 3 (murder)	value 7 (shock)
run 38 (print)	threshold 2 (tax/pain)	turnover 2 (staff)	

8 THE 'FACTORY' GROUP

These nouns refer to places. The first noun tells you more about the place; there is a wide variety of relationships between the first and second nouns. The relationships include:

- the first noun indicates an activity which is carried on in the place e.g. *picnic area*
- the first noun indicates something which grows in the place e.g. *olive grove*
- the first noun indicates something which is made in the place e.g. *chocolate factory*
- the first noun indicates the people who are in the place e.g. *refugee camp*

This is a productive use.

I'm putting a *wild-flower bed* here by the lawn and there's still an area to do at the back.

The six-level tourist *apartment block* is expected to be completed by October.

He is sitting on a warm, early summer day, at a table in a Paris *street cafe*.

After months in a *refugee camp* in Zaire, she has been reunited with her mother.

Paris has a reputation as the *fashion capital* of the world.

He hopes to build a vast casino and *leisure complex* that would rival any in Las Vegas.

The company had its start in a loft above a *shoe factory* and went on to develop the world's first automatic paper copier.

The new *village hall* seems an oasis of warmth and light and laughter in the blackness of the rural night.

Bill Rice owns a *textile mill* in South Carolina that employs about 300 workers.

At first all I saw was the *football pitch*, then the school and the hospital.

That night they made camp beside a *duck pond* in a farmer's pasture.

The National Trust runs a *bird sanctuary* on the Farn Islands, off the coast of Northumberland.

Before the match, buses will leave the Queen St *bus station* every five minutes.

area 3 (picnic)	department (geography)	joint 5 (hamburger)
base 8 (army)	desk 2 (reception)	lane 4 (shipping)
basin 3,4,5	desk 3 (sports)	lodge 1 (ski)
bay 2 (loading)	district (business)	lounge 3 (departure)
bay 3 (cargo)	dump 5 (ammunition)	mart
bed 3 (flower)	establishment 2 (research)	mecca 2 (tourist)
belt 3 (corn)	factory	mill 3 (textile)
block 1 (apartment)	fair 9	mine
booth 1	farm 3 (trout)	ministry
café 2	field 3 (oil)	office 2 (press)
camp 1 (refugee)	floor 3	office 3 (ticket)
capital 5 (fashion)	forecourt	outlet 1 (retail)
car 3 (buffet)	ground 5 (hunting)	paradise 3 (consumer)
centre 1 (leisure)	ground 6 (football)	park 3 (business)
centre 2 (insurance)	grounds 7	parlour 2
complex (leisure)	grove 1 (olive)	pit (grave)
court 1 (divorce)	habitat (forest)	pitch 1
court 3 (tennis)	hall 2	pond
deck (passenger)	house 2,4,5	preserve 6 (nature)
delta	interchange 3	range 9 (rifle)

region 1 (Gulf)	school 4 (art)	station 2 (bus)
reserve 5 (nature)	shed 2	stop 9 (bus)
resort 5 (seaside)	shop 3,4	store 5 (grain)
retreat 4 (country)	showroom	terminal 3 (rail)
route 2 (bus)	site 1	warren 1 (rabbit)
salon 1	space 2 (office)	works 28 (steel)
sanctuary 3	stand 21 (newspaper)	yard 3 (ship repair)
school 3 (riding)	station 1 (train)	zone 1

9 THE 'SURFACE' GROUP

The second noun refers to a part of something, and the first noun indicates what it is a part of.

Standing by the doors, she looked down and saw a *cigarette butt* on the garage floor.

This oil is distilled from the *flower head* of an evergreen tree from Madagascar.

I stubbed my toes against a *table leg* and felt the pain and bit back the cry.

Doctors have discovered that dressings made from boiled *potato peelings* help burns to heal faster.

The *road surface* remained damp from overnight mists.

A cut rope dangled from a *tree trunk* where the other canoe had been tethered.

barrel 3 (gun)	butt 3 (cigarette)	peelings	stub 1 (cigarette)
base 4 (bed)	core 1	rind 1 (lemon)	stub 2 (ticket)
bed 5 (sea)	face 1.3 (cliff)	rind 2 (bacon)	stub 3 (cheque)
bottom 2 (valley)	head 7 (screw/flower)	shaft 2	stump 1 (tree)
bottoms 10 (pyjama)	leg 4 (table)	skin 2	surface 1
butt 2 (rifle)	lining 3	stalk 1	trunk 1

10 THE 'ADDICTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to mental or physical states or conditions, usually negative ones. In some cases the first noun indicates the part of the body which is affected by the complaint, for example *lung cancer* is sited in the lungs. In other cases the first noun gives more information about the problem, for example *sleep disturbance* and *fainting fit*.

Martinez said he tries to help fellow homeless people whenever he can, but that widespread *drug and alcohol addiction* often make that a daunting task.

Sleep deprivation is the worst problem.

She has *eye infections* and she has really painful *back and neck ache*.

The canal *mania* of the late 18th century produced some amazingly bizarre and impractical schemes.

Keep the *hunger pangs* at bay with snacks and muesli bars which can be easily carried.

He fell ill overnight with a *stomach upset*.

ache 2	dependence 2 (drug)	mania 1
addiction 1	dependency 3 (drug)	overload 2 (information)
attack 6	deprivation (sleep)	pang
bug 6	disorder 1,3	poisoning <3 (food)
cancer	disturbance 3	strain 6
complaint 3 (skin)	fetish 1	syndrome 2 (Gulf War)
condition 6 (heart)	fit 2 (coughing)	trouble 4 (back)
defect (speech)	habit 3 (cocaine)	upset 5 (stomach)
deficiency 1 (vitamin)	infection	

11 THE 'HUNTING' GROUP

These nouns refer to activities. Usually the thing indicated by the first noun is directly affected by or involved with the activity indicated by the second noun; for example, *food distribution* involves distributing food; *power generation* involves generating power. There are some exceptions to this; for example in *shooting spree* and *tennis tournament*, the first noun gives more information about the second noun.

He died last year of a heart attack while being treated for **drug abuse**.

Chomsky sees himself as preparing the ground for a successful theory of first language **acquisition**.

I found **wood carving** satisfying and painting fun.

In the US they have very tight controls on **waste disposal**.

She is planning to go to South America, and she would like to use her teaching skills to promote **health education**.

Labour's plan to ban more **power generation** from gas would mean soaring electricity bills.

Vicky had been deserted by her husband and forced to go out **job hunting** to support herself and her young son.

By then the Honda company was the biggest motorcycle manufacturer in the world, and the next year it went into **car manufacture**.

Experts have long been concerned about the quality of private **nursery provision**.

Basketball and going to the opera are among his **leisure pursuits**.

Some airlines and tour companies will throw in free **car rental**.

A gunman with a high-powered rifle went on a **shooting spree**, killing eight people including a toddler and a policeman.

In the Burgundy area of France there's the opportunity for **wine-tasting** at some of the world's most famous vineyards.

One of Sheffield's main crime problems is **car theft**.

Over the entire episode looms the dark shape of US government complicity in vast **drug-trafficking and gun-running**.

abuse 1 (drug)	hire 3	rubbing 1 (brass)
abuse 3 (child)	hook-up (satellite)	-running (gun)
accompaniment 1 (piano)	hunt 3	rustling 1
acquisition 4 (language)	hunting 2 (job)	shake-up
allocation 2 (resource)	limitation 1 (damage)	-spotting (train)
-baiting 1,2	making 1	spree
-bashing 1,2	management 3 (time)	stoppage 1
carving 2 (wood)	manufacture 1 (car)	swap 1
conservation 1 (nature)	misuse 1 (drug)	tampering (product)
conservation 3 (energy)	operation 1 (rescue)	tap 5 (phone)
construction 2 (boat)	practice 2	tasting (wine)
consumption 1 (fuel)	propulsion	theft
consumption 2 (alcohol)	provision 1 (nursery)	tournament
control 6 (arms)	pursuits 5 (leisure)	trafficking 4 (drug)
dealing 2,3 (drug)	rationing (food)	transfer 6 (data)
disposal 2 (waste)	reduction 1,2	transmission 1 (data)
distribution 1 (food)	relief 3 (famine)	transplant 1 (heart)
distribution 2 (income)	rental	trials 5 (horse)
donation 2 (organ)	repair	update 2 (news)
education 2 (health)	reshuffle (cabinet)	uptake 1 (calcium)
effort 3 (famine relief)	restraint 3 (wage)	utilization
embargo 1 (arms)	reversal 2	warfare 1,2
fiddle 5 (tax)	rigging (vote)	-watching
generation 5 (power)	routine 5 (dance)	waving 3 (flag)

12 THE 'SHORTAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to events or situations. In some cases the thing indicated by the first noun is directly affected by the event indicated by the second noun; for example, *weight loss* is the loss of weight. In other cases the first noun gives more information about the event or situation; for example, *news blackout* and *housing boom*.

Mr Mubarak survived an **assassination attempt** on Monday by gunmen who fired on his motorcade.

Artillery **bombardment** has continued unabated from the hills around the town.

His father, a minister in Nkrumah's government, died in a mysterious **car crash**.

Ipswich is heading for a **population explosion** that threatens to swamp the city's public transport system within 20 years.

Election fever is spreading, and there's a rush to educate millions of new voters.

Fears are growing of a **cholera outbreak** in the city where there has been no piped water since July.

One of the new features in **arms proliferation** in the past 10 years has been that the so-called Southern countries have become able to build sophisticated weapons.

She believed that part of her weight problem was caused by **fluid retention**.

The failure of suppliers to deliver products had led to a disastrous **food shortage** in the city.

In these most vulnerable sites shipping can cause disturbance to wildlife and even a small **oil spill** would be catastrophic.

It's worth remembering that **staff turnover** is likely to be 10-20 per cent a year.

affair 2 (Watergate)	epidemic	outbreak
attempt 2 (coup)	explosion 3 (population)	processing 4 (data)
blackout 2 (news)	extravaganza	proliferation
blackout 3 (power)	failure 5,6	reduction 1,2
blitz 4 (advertising)	fever 2 (election)	retention
bombardment	flow 1 (blood)	roadshow (Radio 1)
boom 2 (housing)	flow 2 (traffic)	sales 1 (ticket)
buyout (management)	flow 3 (information)	session 3 (therapy)
championship	freeze 7 (wage)	shortage
class 2	gain 3 (weight)	spectacular 2 (television)
crash 1	growth 2 (population)	spill 2 (oil)
craze	hike 3 (tax)	spurt 3 (growth)
cut 7 (tax)	infestation 1	swing 8 (mood)
cut 9 (electricity)	injection 2 (cash)	turnover 2 (staff)
depletion (ozone)	lapse 2,5	wreck 4 (car)
display 6	loss 1,7	

13 THE 'AGENCY' GROUP

These nouns refer to groups of people and organizations. The first noun gives more information about the group or organization.

In Taiwan, a **government agency** organised the dissemination of foreign technology and best practice.

The local **planning authority** is insisting that the manor should only be used either as a country club, hotel or luxury apartments.

The C.A.A. is a very busy **government body** which acts as watchdog on aircraft safety.

Once, the Whitehall and ministerial establishment backed nuclear power with as much passion as the beard-and-sandals **brigade** opposed it.

He was boasting of his plans to build another worldwide **business empire** from his Spanish island refuge.

The government **pollution inspectorate** has given initial approval for National Power's plans but called for further evidence of emission controls.

Police who smashed an international **drugs ring** have been told they can keep the cash and cars they seized.

The Office of Fair Trading, the **business and consumer watchdog**, gets a new director general from October.

academy 1	element 3 (hooligan)	population 2 (adult)
administration 3,4	empire 2 (business)	profession 2
agency 1,2	fraternity 2 (yachting)	ring 2,6 (spy)
authority 2	giant 2	school 6 (Chicago)
body 4 (government)	group 2,3,4	section 1 (wind)
brigade 2	hierarchy 2	service 1 (health)
chain 6 (supermarket)	high command	set 1,5 (polo)
community 2	inspectorate	squad 1
company	label 5 (record)	station 3 (TV)
concern 11 (business)	line 16 (shipping)	system 1 (prison)
crowd 2 (Hollywood)	lobby 2 (farming)	troop 3 (scout)
directorate 2	movement 1 (feminist)	union 3 (currency)
division 5 (sales)	network 2 (support)	watchdog (consumer)
division 6 (army)	network 4 (TV)	

14 THE 'INDUSTRY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a field of work or activity. The first noun indicates what that field is.

Since 1991 he has been trying to engineer a revolution in the **car industry**.

Do you know anybody who's in the **hairstressing line**?

Humphries says the best opportunities are related to continued growth in the **service sector**.

business 5 (music)	line 27 (hairstressing)	world 6 (art)
circles 8 (fashion)	sector 1 (service)	
industry 2 (car)	trade 3 (tourist)	

15 THE 'SEASON' GROUP

These nouns refer to times or periods of time. The first noun gives more information about the time, for example indicating when it is or what happens then.

For many North Yorkshire children the **Easter holidays** start this afternoon.

Even during normal **office hours** it would be easy for someone to walk in and out of the car park without being challenged or even seen.

As the **baseball season** begins, the college basketball **season** is nearing its finish.

age 5 (Stone)	holidays 3	season 3 (plum)	shift 6 (afternoon)
equinox (spring)	hours 6 (office)	season 4 (baseball)	slot 3 (evening)
era	period 5 (exercise)	season 5 (summer)	

16 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are many nouns with a wide range of meanings which are often preceded by

another noun. The lists below show some examples.

(i) These nouns refer to physical objects.

The man threw a **dollar bill** on the counter.

The **zip fastening** should be long enough to enable the deep cushion pad to be easily inserted.

Make sure you check your first **aid kit** regularly to ensure it is in good condition.

Working from the studio in her farmhouse, Kitty has now begun making cups, which are hand-painted with a simple **flower motif**.

He was carrying a **tennis racket** in one hand and holding a cup in the other.

He took out some coins, a box of matches and a **bus ticket**, which caught his attention.

I have managed to raise three **peach trees** from seed. When should I plant them in the open and what type of soil do they need?

It is used for many consumer products including toys, cameras, **kitchen ware** and telephones.

accord 1 (peace)	line 9 (washing)	set 1,1 (chess)
aid 1 (food)	line 14 (commuter)	set 1,8 (television)
attire	liner	shaft 1 (lift)
award 1 (bravery)	link 3 (rail)	sheet 3 (information)
bill 4 (dollar)	material 3 (building)	sheeting 1 (plastic)
bite 5 (mosquito)	matter 4 (reading)	show 13 (game)
blossom	mitt 3	siren 1 (police)
board 1 (draughts)	mix 3 (cake)	spawn 1 (frog)
card 2 (identity)	motif 1 (rose)	stitch 4 (cross)
card 4 (birthday)	needle 2	stone 6 (kidney)
certificate 1,2	netting	suit 3
column 5 (gardening)	network 3 (computer)	symbol 2
concerto (piano)	notice 5 (redundancy)	system 2 (computer)
costume 2	pact (trade)	system 3 (heating)
cub 1 (lion)	piece 7 (10p)	system 4 (rail)
drive 7 (disk)	probe 6 (space)	tanker 1 (oil)
duct 1 (air)	programme 2	tanker 2 (petrol)
emblem 1	pup 2 (seal)	ticket 3
family 6 (cabbage)	rack 1 (luggage)	token 2
fastening	racket 3 (tennis)	tree 1
framework 2	range 8 (mountain)	trilogy
gland	requisites 2 (garden)	turret 2 (gun)
graft 1 (skin)	residue (chemical)	voucher
honours list (New Year)	rest 8 (arm)	ware 1 (kitchen)
index 1	ring 2,4 (gas)	wave 7 (pressure)
kingdom 3 (animal)	section 1 (bow)	wave 8 (sound)
kit 1	service 13 (dinner)	world 9 (plant)

(ii) These nouns refer to abstract things.

There is no reason why love shouldn't cross the **age barrier**.

A professional gambler accused of stealing £350,000 from his lover took the money as part of an elaborate **tax dodge**, a court heard yesterday.

Pelling's only **career hiccup** occurred in 1979-80 when hard work on his Toowoomba property built too much muscle and made him too heavy.

I have heard plenty of public comment that the man is not **leadership material**.

Home ownership is continuing to edge up in spite of the problems caused by high mortgage rates.

The album went on to sell over 3 million copies worldwide, which in **music business parlance** means it went triple-platinum.

An unattended attache case caused a **bomb scare** yesterday at a hotel where officials of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations were meeting.

Bit, lark, line 27, and thing are usually used in noun groups beginning with a determiner such as the or this.

I've always been at home and done the **mother bit** and looked after the children.

He is coming along really well, actually, I mean he's doing ever so well with this **fireman lark**.

acumen	jungle 3 (political)	-saver
affairs 6 (consumer)	ladder 2 (career)	scale 2 (Richter)
argot (street)	language 6 (computer)	scale 3 (pay)
barrier 2 (age)	lark 3	scare 3, 4
biology 2 (plant)	law 3	scene 5 (music)
bit 9 (charity/mother)	legacy 2	scheme 1 (pension)
booster 1 (morale)	level 4 (eye)	sense 6 (dress)
circuit 2 (lecture/tennis)	life 6 (sex)	service 6 (bus)
connection (rail)	life 9 (college)	-speak (solicitor)
curriculum 2 (school)	line 12 (supply)	spirit 7 (team)
curve 4 (growth)	machine 3 (publicity)	stakes 5 (popularity)
degree 5 (engineering)	market 6 (job)	structure 2 (career)
dodge 3 (tax)	material 6 (leadership)	studies 4 (media)
dynamics 5 (group)	mechanism 3 (survival)	tag 4 ('slum')
edition (paperback)	medley 2 (200m)	thing 6, 7
ethic 4	mode 1 (survival)	time 18 (six-eight)
facility 2	ownership	time 4 (British Summer)
flavour 2 (orange)	parlance (boxing)	tool 2 (research)
forum 1 (discussion)	physiology 2 (animal)	traffic 2
franchise 1	process 1 (peace)	trail 5 (campaign)
generator 2 (cash)	prospects 3 (job)	trait (personality)
heat 4 (body)	purposes 1 (tax)	underworld 1
hiccup 1	racket 2 (drugs)	vacuum 1 (power)
hint 3 (household)	regime 1 (Franco)	waiver (damage)
indicator 1 (performance)	regime 3 (fitness)	war 2 (trade)
interests 7 (business)	risk 3 (health)	warp 3 (time)
interface 2	risk 4 (credit)	
job 2	rush 5 (Christmas)	

Other related pattern

amount N

The noun is preceded by a word or phrase which indicates an amount.

The driver was suspended by his shirt over a **50-foot drop** for over an hour before he was carried to safety.

He needs a **two-thirds majority** to push through key bills to change the constitution.

That works out as £1.38 per hour for a **72-hour week**.

drop 17	majority 2	notice 3	week 3
lead 1.6	mark 8	radius 1	wingspan

18 num N

The noun is preceded by a number.

number	Noun
two	kilometres
one	pound
three	quarts

The following types of noun are typically preceded by numbers.

1 CURRENCIES

A kilogram of beef costs **8.5 dinars**.

The idea is that **400 investors** will pay **250,000 francs** each to become joint owners of the collection.

Every **billion pounds** spent subsidising a new nuclear power station is **a billion pounds** that could be spent more cost-effectively elsewhere.

They gave me **1000 rupees** and some clothes as a gift and told me to take care of myself.

The singular form of **pound** is sometimes used after a number greater than one, especially when the number and noun are followed by another number, or when they come before a noun.

I went to the doctor's and had two prescriptions which cost me **three pound** forty each.

2 UNITS OF WEIGHT

Customs officers say they have seized more than **seventeen kilograms** of heroin.

If somebody applies for a job who weighs **400 pounds**, a company is less likely to hire them.

The Normandy Mining unit revealed record group annual production of **1.44 million ounces**, up 10.6 per cent.

Around **70 million tonnes** of grain a year is currently traded outside the state price-fixing system.

The singular form of **stone** is sometimes used after a number greater than one.

Her weight dropped from **nine stone** to just over five.

3 UNITS OF SIZE OR DISTANCE

The ski is **4 feet** long and **12 inches** wide, with an injection moulded seat.

The new pond will be larger, **nine metres** across, and will be stocked with aquatic plants and wildlife from nearby ponds.

The Porton Down research establishment, which examines chemical and biological weapons, is **seven miles** from Stonehenge.

Last week Marmul in Oman was soaked by **52 millimetres** of rain in 30 hours.

The singular form of **foot** is sometimes used after a number greater than one.

The horse leaped a **four foot** fence with easy grace.

4 UNITS OF AREA

Usually an area is expressed by putting the word **square** before a unit of size or distance.

Within the **three square miles** of streets, shops and homes, about **800 robberies** occur during a year.

Acres and hectares are also used.

Shortly before the last General Election the couple moved to a seventeenth-century home set in five **acres** nearby.

5 UNITS OF VOLUME AND CAPACITY

Often volume and capacity are expressed by putting the word *cubic* before a unit of size or distance.

The normal adult blood concentration of vitamin E is about 0.8 mg in every 100 **cubic centimetres**.

The well flowed at a rate of 2.016 million **cubic feet** of gas a day.

There are several other units of volume and capacity.

Residents used almost 1650 **litres** of water each as consumption reached a record level in Brisbane City yesterday.

Add two **pints** of water, bring to the boil, then turn the heat right down and simmer.

6 UNITS OF ELECTRICAL CURRENT OR RESISTANCE

By the year 2010, people in Java and Bali will consume about 27,000 **megawatts** of electricity.

A motorist was so fed up with thieves trying to steal his high performance car he wired it up with 8,500 **volts** of electricity, a court heard yesterday.

7 UNITS OF TIME

At our proposed speed, the Jaguar burns half a tonne of fuel every 11 **minutes**. The flight would last an **hour** and 25 **minutes**.

The deadlock in the 15-week negotiations aimed at reducing the 500bn dollar deficit over five **years** was finally broken just 10 **hours** before the deadline of midnight last night.

8 OTHER UNITS OF MEASUREMENT

Another frozen yoghurt, Kemps, has only 100 **calories** and 2.5g of fat per 100g.

I have tested a selection of sheer black tights, choosing 20 **denier** and under.

A frequency channel at the top of the VHF band covering the range 223 to 230 **megahertz** is free for use in all European countries except France.

The book suggests 10 **per cent** of the teachers' salary budget be devoted to further training.

The residential customer using 400 **therms** of natural gas monthly would see a 6.7 per cent annual increase.

The quilts, which are 6.5 **togs** and cotton lined, are designed for use without extra bedding.

19 ord N

The noun is preceded by an **ordinal** – that is, an ordinal number such as *first* or *second*, or an adjective such as *next*, *last*, or *final*.

	ordinal	noun
the	first	half
the	next	step
the	tenth	floor

Many nouns sometimes have a ordinal in front of them, as in *my first husband* or *her second day as President*. The nouns listed here are always or typically preceded by an ordinal.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ROUND' GROUP
- 2 THE 'STAGE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'STOREY' GROUP
- 4 THE 'EDITION' GROUP
- 5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ROUND' GROUP

These nouns refer to an officially defined part of a sports match or tournament.

Graf had to save a break point in the third **game** of the third **set** before prompting Seles to net a forehand on break point.

Top-seeded Henri Leconte of France is through to the second **round** of the Geneva Open.

game 3	lap 2	round 2,2,3
half 3	leg 6	set 1,2

2 THE 'STAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to one stage of a process or journey.

The first **leg** of their journey – from Cardiff to Corfu – went without mishap.

The Bill has its second **reading** in the Commons on Friday and is being supported by MPs from all parties.

Their meeting will mark the next **stage** in the peace process.

leg 5	stage 1	stop 11
reading 5	step 5,6	

3 THE 'STOREY' GROUP

These nouns refer to one of a series or to one part of something where there are other similar parts.

A large proportion of the prisons in this country were built in the nineteenth **century**.

The lunch was excellent, especially the first **course**.

TJ always got his man, usually with some mad police chase in the last **reel**.

Earlier, a 21-year-old man from Corinda received broken ribs after jumping from the third **storey** of a block of **apartments** in Oak St.

Her onslaught was contained in the second **volume** of her memoirs, 'The Path to Power'.

anniversary	division 8	millennium 2	storey
century	floor 2	precinct 2	volume 4
course 7	grade 5	reel 2	

4 THE 'EDITION' GROUP

These nouns refer to copies of a book or other publication that are produced at a particular time.

Nearly two generations have grown up since the first **edition** of this book was published in 1953.

edition 1,2 printing

5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Bulgaria finished in **second place** with seven golds.

All entries must be received by **first post** on Monday 26th April.

They're always swearing and saying they'll beat up little **first years**.

exit 2 place 10 power 11 time 13,14
parallel 6 post 3 seed 4 year 5

20 N that

The noun is followed by a **that-clause**. The word *that* is sometimes omitted.

	Noun	that-clause
the	accusation	that he is a dictator
the	demand	that weapons should be handed in
no	guarantee	that war can be avoided
the	impression	you were quite upset

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'SUGGESTION' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP
- 3 THE 'HAPPINESS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'SIGN' GROUP
- 5 THE 'POSSIBILITY' GROUP
- 6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'SUGGESTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is written or spoken. The **that-clause** provides more information about it.

I deny your **allegation** that he 'bullied staff and inmates, who all feared him'.

The court rejected **arguments** that he would not have a fair trial.

I was delighted to read your most recent **assertion** that class size makes no contribution to exam success.

He staunchly defended the government against the **charge** that it had abandoned genuine Toryism.

He disputed Iraq's **claims** that it had no biological weapons.

The Times says the figures prove nothing except the truth of the old **cliché** that there is no lie as big as a statistic.

The **criticism** that the English do not truly care about their children is often voiced.

She provided examples to support the **generalization** that crime among children and adolescents is on the rise.

Finally a waiter asked if he would like fresh coffee, a **hint** that the table was needed.

He is understood to be incensed by the alleged **insinuation** that he had peddled drugs to children.

Mr Hull stands by the cautious **message** that prices are not set to rise overnight.

The **motto** that one's home is one's castle is engraved on my heart.

It is not a hoax but a genuine **notification** that you are entitled to a free cash gift.

You're putting forward the **proposition** that a crime can be excused if the victim deserved to be the victim.

Which French leader made famous the **remark** that the British are a nation of shopkeepers?

There are **reports** that lorries carrying British beef have been stopped at the Luxembourg border.

There was a **suggestion** that the whole thing was a joke.

David wanted an **undertaking** that Shirley would leave him alone in peace to get on with his life.

Seven months later I heard a **whisper** that all the drugs were being shipped out to the US instead of to us.

accusation	decree	message	report
acknowledgement	defence	motto	request
adage	demand	myth	resolution 1
admission	denial	news	retort
advice	dictum	notification	revelation
affirmation	directive	oath	rule
allegation	disclosure	objection	ruling
announcement	edict	observation	rumour
aphorism	equation	order	saying
appeal	excuse	plea	slogan
argument 1	explanation	pledge	speculation
assertion	forecast	point	statement
assurance	generalization	prediction	stipulation
axiom	gossip	preface	story
boast	guarantee >3	proclamation	suggestion
caveat	guess	promise	tale
charge	hint	prophecy	talk 8
claim	implication	proposal	teaching
cliché	information	proposition	testimony
comment	insinuation	protest	threat
commitment	insistence	proverb	truism
complaint	intelligence 3	provision	undertaking
condition 5	jibe	proviso	verdict
confession	law	question	vow
confirmation <2	legend	reassurance	warning
contention	lesson	recommendation	whisper >2
criticism	line 20	remark	word 8
declaration	maxim	reminder	

2 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP

These nouns refer to beliefs, ideas, wishes, and thought processes. The **that-clause** provides more information about them.

There's a **belief** that saving for private education should start on the day the child is born.

There was still a remarkably strong consensus that care in the community was the right policy.

A young fellow laboured under the delusion that he was a dog.

He emphasized the United States' determination that all hostages should be freed.

One day my husband told me that he'd had a dream that he was a baby and I was his mother.

He accepted a six-month contract abroad in the expectation that Sally would soon forget him.

I had a feeling I'd do well here.

He expressed the hope that his successor can emerge from within the ranks of the racing industry.

They encourage the idea that the government is to blame for anything that goes wrong in the country.

The Chancellor holds fast to the notion that high taxes are bad for economic growth.

Fortunately for me, my kids are of the persuasion that their failings are of their own making.

He had an unshakable premonition that he would die.

The presumption that the French would proceed with testing without a care for world opinion was wrong.

We work on the principle that if we treat people well, they'll work well for us.

What I am arguing for is recognition that moderate inflation is healthy.

He has instead adopted a public stance that he intends to enforce changes of his choosing.

There still exists an ancient superstition that children may be protected from evil spirits by wearing cloves around their necks.

Mr Blair made clear his view that the law should grant the right to join a union – and the right not to join.

acceptance	doctrine	misapprehension	resolution 2
agreement	dogma	misconception	resolve
analysis	doubt	misunderstanding	scepticism
anticipation	dream	myth	sense 3
appreciation	expectation	notion	sentiment
approach	faith	opinion	speculation
assessment	fallacy	perception	stance
assumption	fantasy	persuasion 2	standpoint
attitude	fear	philosophy	superstition
awareness	feeling 8,9	position 8	supposition
belief	finding	postulate	suspicion
calculation	hope	precept	tenet
certainty	hunch	premise	theory
certitude	hypothesis	presentiment	thesis
concept	idea	presumption	thinking
conception	ideal	presupposition	thought
conclusion	illusion	principle	understanding
confidence	impression	projection	view
consensus	inference	rationale	viewpoint
conviction	inkling	rationalization	vision
credo	instinct	realization	wisdom
decision	interpretation	reasoning	wish
delusion	intuition	recognition	worry
desire	judgement	recollection	
determination	knowledge	reflection	

3 THE 'HAPPINESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to emotions. The that-clause indicates what they relate to.

He was in conference at the time, and picked up the receiver with a mild annoyance that his secretary had let the call through.

He expressed concern that the ship might be in distress.

I can only feel great delight that I chose your company.

You will feel disgust that whales and dolphins are still being slaughtered for commercial gain.

There are fears that the increasing use of microwaves will mean increased risk of food poisoning.

She felt no guilt that she had broken her marriage vows.

He felt a surge of happiness that she could not hurt him any more.

Negotiators are expressing guarded optimism that the surviving hostages may soon be freed.

Among those I have talked to is a quiet pride that they protected their Parliament and contributed in a small way to defending their country's fragile democracy.

He has a recurring regret that he had never told his father that he loved him and never heard his father say it to him.

The great relief and great pleasure that we are making progress at last swept over me in a wave.

Understandably, parents feel deep resentment that their child is subjected to 'tests', almost like a laboratory animal.

She described her sadness that in gaining a lover, she has lost a friend.

She lives in daily terror that she and her family will lose their home.

amazement	disgust	indignation	remorse
anger	disquiet	irritation	resentment
annoyance	dread	jealousy	sadness
anxiety	fear	joy	satisfaction
apprehension	foreboding	optimism	shame
astonishment	frustration	outrage	shock
bitterness	fury	pleasure	sorrow
concern	gratitude	pride	surprise
delight	guilt	rage	terror
disappointment	happiness	regret	unhappiness
disbelief	hope	relief	worry

4 THE 'SIGN' GROUP

These nouns refer to signs or evidence that something is the case.

The Sunny's smooth, sleek body is your first clue that this car is a high performer with exceptional fuel economy.

There is some evidence that children who live close to electric power lines have a slightly higher risk of leukemia.

There are indications that there will be other resignations today.

Had there been any intimation that he might want to take his own life?

His murder was proof that racism has not gone away.

The bombings are taken as a sign that the West has finally shown that it can assert its authority.

clue	hint	proof	symptom
confirmation >1	indication	sign	
demonstration	indicator	signal	
evidence	intimation	symbol	

5 THE 'POSSIBILITY' GROUP

These nouns are used when talking about how likely or unlikely something is.

There was a reasonable **chance** that the knife had been the murder weapon.

There are a number of advantages in writing to potential employers and offering your services on the **off-chance** that they have a suitable vacancy.

Riemann was describing the **possibility** that the entire Universe might be contained within what we would now call a black hole.

There was a significant **risk** that inflation would continue to rise.

Doubt, guarantee, hope, and question are usually used with the determiner *no* or *little*.

There was **no doubt** that the Americans had had a severe shock.

chance 1	hope	odds	question 12
danger	impossibility	off-chance	risk
doubt	inevitability	possibility	
guarantee 2	likelihood	probability	

6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a large number of other nouns which have this pattern. All of them are abstract nouns which need the sort of definition or expansion that is provided by the *that*-clause.

This business had the added **advantage** that it could be run from home.

He will choose his friends on the **basis** that each has something special to offer which makes him different from the others.

The US is pressing the **case** that Nato must have full control.

Is there any **convention** that male tennis players should serve more softly to women in mixed doubles?

Work to make the Leaning Tower of Pisa lean a little less was abruptly halted at the weekend after the **discovery** that it had tilted a further 2.5mm after just one day's work on the foundations.

The **fact** that the earthquake hit so early in the morning probably saved tens of thousands of workers.

The **pretence** that society has as its top priority giving the best opportunities to its children is seen to be a sham.

She starts borrowing money from Irene on the **pretext** that the cheque is in the mail.

We still have the **problem** that so many people are seeing the values of their property fall below their mortgage.

advantage	connection	disadvantage	justification
anomaly	consequence	discovery	limitation
appearance	consideration	effect	notice 3
basis	contradiction	exception	paradox
benefit	conundrum	fact	pretence
case	convention	fiction	pretext
coincidence	deception	gamble	problem
complication	dilemma	grounds	prospect

reason	scenario	theme	twist 8
restriction	sensation	tradition	
result	sense 11	truth	

21 Nto-inf

The noun is followed by a *to*-infinitive clause.

	Noun	to-infinitive clause
an	attempt	to patch up past differences
her	desire	to fit in with society
	scope	to save money

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'DESIRE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ARRANGEMENT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PROMISE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'PROPOSAL' GROUP
- 5 THE 'ATTEMPT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ABILITY' GROUP
- 7 THE 'PERMISSION' GROUP
- 8 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP
- 9 THE 'RESPONSIBILITY' GROUP
- 10 THE 'REASON' GROUP
- 11 THE 'TENDENCY' GROUP
- 12 THE 'CLAIM' GROUP
- 13 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'DESIRE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's desire or intention to do something, or their unwillingness to do something.

All four teams have shown a **desire** to win.

Speaking in Paris, the Greek Prime Minister strongly condemned the attack and reaffirmed the government's **determination** to eliminate terrorism in Greece.

Unfortunately, my mother had a tremendous **longing** to go back to Berlin.

And she could understand his **unwillingness** to share his room.

Try drinking water whenever you get the **urge** to eat something.

I don't know how to cook and I have no **wish** to learn.

aim	disposition 2	intention	resolve
ambition	eagerness	itch >2	unwillingness
aspirations	hankering	keenness	urge
compulsion	hurry	longing	will
concern	impatience	lust	willingness
craving	impulse	need	wish
desire	inclination	passion	yearning
determination	instinct 3	readiness	yen
disinclination	intent	reluctance	

2 THE 'ARRANGEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to an arrangement or plan.

*I think the thing that impressed me most is that no one is making any **arrangements** to leave.*

*My **decision** to resign was made after much consideration.*

*Meanwhile, the authorities are said to have found the mastermind of the **plot** to kill the ex-prime minister.*

agreement	conspiracy	decision	plot
appointment	contract	pact	scheme
arrangement	deal	plans	

3 THE 'PROMISE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a promise or threat.

*The new President now faces the difficult task of trying to fulfil his **promise** to bring about faster and more efficient economic change.*

*For that reason no one should take the report of his **threat** to resign at face value.*

commitment	promise	undertaking
pledge	threat	vow

4 THE 'PROPOSAL' GROUP

These nouns refer to proposals.

*The Government yesterday ruled out controversial **proposals** to make police forces compete with each other for funds.*

motion	proposal
offer	suggestion

5 THE 'ATTEMPT' GROUP

These nouns refer to an attempt to do or achieve something.

*By 1961, they were making few **attempts** to keep their affair a secret.*

*Twenty people were injured as police fired shots in the air and baton-charged the crowds in a **bid** to restore order.*

*The **campaign** to stop people drink driving has been successful because of the amount of resources that were put into it.*

*The lead story in several papers is the **rush** to buy shares in Britain's newly-privatised electricity companies.*

attempt	drive	mission	rush
battle	effort	move	scramble
bid	endeavour	push	struggle
campaign	fight	quest	
crusade	initiative	race	

6 THE 'ABILITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to the ability or opportunity to do something, or the inability to do something.

*She is confident in her **ability** to cope with whatever weather conditions may arise.*

*Children should have the **opportunity** to explore ideas, follow their interests, expand their horizons.*

*He knows exactly what he is saying and will soon have the **power** to see his wishes through.*

*Always make concessions while you still have **room** to manoeuvre.*

ability	freedom	opportunity	scope
capability	inability	option	space
capacity	incapacity	potential	time
chance	instinct	power	
facility	means	room	

7 THE 'PERMISSION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the permission or right that someone has to do something.

*Meanwhile, in June 1989, the two men had applied for **leave** to appeal against their convictions.*

*The author and publisher wish to thank the following for **permission** to quote copyright material.*

*He was outraged that women had just been given the **right** to vote.*

authority	franchise	leave	permission
authorization	freedom	licence	permit
carte blanche	go-ahead	mandate	right

8 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP

These nouns refer to requests. When the to-infinitive is active, in most cases someone is asking someone else to do something. However, in the case of *application*, and sometimes *demand* and *request*, someone is asking to be allowed to do something themselves.

*Shots were heard after Jones ignored **appeals** to surrender.*

*The 22-year-old's **demand** to be allowed to leave will now be put before the club's board of directors.*

*Shortly after, I took up his **invitation** to visit him in his study at the museum.*

*The couple were stunned when their **request** to adopt a child was approved.*

appeal	command	instruction	plea
application	demand	invitation	pressure
call	entreaty	message	request
clamour	injunction	order	warning

In the case of *appeal*, *injunction*, *invitation*, and *warning*, the noun is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with 'to' and a to-infinitive clause. This pattern is N to n to-inf.

*Her father gave a moving **warning** to other parents to be aware of what their children were up to.*

Nouns

9 THE 'RESPONSIBILITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a responsibility that someone has to do something. They often follow the verb *have*.

You have a legal **obligation** to provide for homeless people in your area.

We all have a **responsibility** to maintain an environment in which wildlife can flourish.

brief 7	obligation
duty	responsibility

10 THE 'REASON' GROUP

These nouns refer to reasons for doing something. We include here *disincentive*, which refers to a reason for not doing something.

The Government must get rid of this **disincentive** to save.

She was not in the least cold, but she'd had to find some **excuse** to get away.

Some players are paid fees as **inducements** to win big games.

Orr says there's no **reason** to believe that any school employees have engaged in wrongdoing.

bribe	encouragement	incentive	motivation
cause	excuse	inducement	reason
disincentive	impetus	inspiration	temptation

11 THE 'TENDENCY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a tendency that someone or something has.

It was very, very difficult for me and I have a **tendency** to give things up if they're very, very difficult.

predisposition	propensity	tendency
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12 THE 'CLAIM' GROUP

These nouns refer to claims.

Cleveland has a legitimate **claim** to be the birthplace of rock and roll.

claim	pretension 2
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13 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Despite Australia's **failure** to reach the final, Thomson was adamant that they were as good as any of the other competing nations.

It was a fast enough time to make him the **favourite** to win.

Given Britain's **refusal** to accept the plan, it is hard to see how it can make progress.

With a stopwatch at the ready, the headmistress gave the **signal** to start.

She said it was difficult to break back into the academic sphere after taking **time out** to have a family.

John decided the best **way** to get publicity was to race the car at Le Mans.

Job always comes after the verb *have*.

With all these different pensions, you're going to have a **job** to keep track.

Position always comes after the preposition *in*.

I was glad to be in a **position** to help her.

cue	fitness 10	position 9	temptation
deadline	help	queue	time out
failure	imperative	refusal	way
favourite	job 5	signal	

Productive uses

1 Many nouns can be followed by a to-infinitive clause which indicates the purpose or function of the thing referred to, e.g. *a party to celebrate her 18th birthday*, *a device to measure energy consumption*, *legislation to combat age discrimination*.

2 Any noun which refers to something quantifiable may be preceded by *too much* or *enough* and followed by a to-infinitive clause. The to-infinitive clause may be negative, beginning with *not*.

Unfortunately nobody, including Dennis, had enough **money** to pay for it.

He was in too much **pain** to speak.

I still have enough **sense** not to jump out of a third-floor window simply because I happen to be on the third floor.

3 A to-infinitive clause is used after any noun preceded by *the* and a superlative adjective or an ordinal such as *first* or *second*. The noun refers to the understood Subject of the to-infinitive clause.

It will be the largest **crowd** to watch a soccer college tournament live in this country.

She was the first **woman** to be appointed a State Governor in India.

If the adjective is *best*, *right*, or *only*, the noun may refer to a person and be followed by a clause with that person as the understood Subject.

He was not the right **person** to lead us into the next decade.

Alternatively, the noun may refer to a person or thing and be followed by a to-infinitive whose understood Subject is someone or something else.

Eventually she decided that teaching was the right **path** to take.

Sometimes a noun is used with *the* but without an adjective to mean 'the right one'.

We think he is the **man** to lead Chelsea into the next century.

4 Any noun which refers to a person of a particular kind can be followed by a to-infinitive clause if it is used with the modal auxiliaries *must* and *have to*, or with the verb *need*. The to-infinitive clause in these examples means 'in order to'. The Subject of the main clause is the same as the understood Subject of the to-infinitive clause.

You don't have to be a **genius** to guess what happens in the movie.

You need to be a small compact **person** to enjoy this car.

I would have to be a **saint** to put up with your resentments, your foot-dragging, your evil temper.

5 The noun is followed by a to-infinitive clause which indicates what can be done to or

with the thing referred to by the noun, e.g. *a man to watch, a book to read, a job to do*.

Other related patterns

the N to-inf

The noun is preceded by the determiner *the* and followed by a to-infinitive clause.

the	Noun	to-infinitive clause
the	guts	to stand up for what she believes in
the	money	to pay for it

Note that this pattern typically occurs after the verb *have*.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'COURAGE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'RESOURCES' GROUP
- 3 THE 'MISFORTUNE' GROUP

1 THE 'COURAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to qualities needed to do something. Sometimes this is a good quality, e.g. *courage*, and sometimes a bad one, e.g. *cheek*.

*I hope that they will find the **courage** to tell them.*

*I didn't have the **energy** to eat.*

*I don't know how you two have got the **nerve** to show your faces round these parts.*

*They also had the **sense** to quit while they were ahead.*

audacity	courtesy	gumption	strength
balls	decency	guts	talent
bottle	effrontery	heart	temerity
cheek	energy	imagination	vision
class	flexibility	nerve	wit
clout	foresight	nous	
confidence	gall	sense	
courage	grace	skill	

2 THE 'RESOURCES' GROUP

These nouns refer to the resources needed to do something.

*This will be the first time he has been given a big club with a lot of good players and the **resources** to build a good team.*

*My only complaint is that I didn't have the **time** to attend more events.*

money	space	wherewithal
resources	time	

3 THE 'MISFORTUNE' GROUP

These nouns refer to good or bad luck.

*He had not only been dancing violently, but punching people who had the **misfortune** to get in his way.*

bad luck	luck
good fortune	misfortune

N for n to-inf

See Section 31, N for n.

N to n to-inf

See meaning group 8 above.

v-link N to-inf

The noun is preceded by a link verb (usually *be*) and is followed by a to-infinitive. There may be a determiner before the noun, depending on what it is.

The understood Subject of the to-infinitive is different from the Subject of the link verb.

	link verb	Noun	to-infinitive
It	is	a delight	to drive.
He	was	hell	to live with.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'PLEASURE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BITCH' GROUP

1 THE 'PLEASURE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone or something is pleasant or unpleasant to use or encounter.

*The rod is light and a **joy** to use.*

*Her film reviews were a **pleasure** to read.*

Fun, hell, and murder are used with no determiner.

*Sri Lanka are not the biggest named outfit in world cricket, but they are great **fun** to watch.*

delight	fun	joy	nightmare
dream	hell	murder	pleasure

2 THE 'BITCH' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone or something is easy or difficult to use, deal with, or encounter.

*It was a **bitch** to write.*

*The hood is drum-tight, well insulated, leak-free, and a **doddle** to operate.*

*Trouble comes after the determiner *no* or *little*.*

The trucks are no **trouble** to drive: they feel just like a car.

beast	bugger	pig
bitch	doddle	trouble

v-link adj N to-inf

The noun is preceded by a link verb and an adjective and followed by a to-infinitive. The meaning depends on the adjective. This pattern is productive: any noun with a fairly general meaning can be used with this pattern.

It was a hard **decision** to make.

It's a good **habit** to get into.

It's an easy **mistake** to make.

That's a very difficult **question** to answer.

Apart from this, she was a wonderful **person** to work with.

Do you think this country is a better **place** to live in than it was 10 years ago?

It's a high **price** to pay for peace of mind.

It was a beautiful **sight** to see.

It's a huge **step** to take.

That was a stupid **thing** to do.

That's an awful **thing** to say.

Note that the to-infinitive after **place** very often does not end with the preposition *in*, although it is logically expected.

It was a great **place** to work.

Note that nouns such as *time* and *moment* also have this pattern.

Now is a good **time** to buy a classic car.

decision	moment	price	step
habit	person	question	thing
mistake	place	sight	time

In the case of *thing*, the to-infinitive may be *happen*, in which case the understood Subject of the to-infinitive is the same as the Subject of the link verb.

It was a terrible **thing** to happen.

Note that there is one noun, *fool*, which is followed by an ordinary to-infinitive clause, which may have an Object. The understood Subject of the to-infinitive is the same as the Subject of the link verb. *Idiot* occasionally has this pattern too.

You'd be a **fool** to miss it.

22 N about n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *about* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause. These patterns are **N about -ing** and **N about wh**.

	Noun	about	noun group/-ing clause/wh-clause
a	chat	about	football
a	documentary	about	coping with life-threatening conditions
	doubts	about	what her chosen career should be

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'TALK' GROUP
- 2 THE 'STORY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'IDEAS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'DISAGREEMENT' GROUP
- 5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'TALK' GROUP

These nouns refer to speech or information. We include here *reticence* and *silence*, which refer to a failure to speak.

I wanted his **advice** about Christopher's will.

I'm used to **jokes** about women drivers.

Rumours about the cause of the accident still circulate in the area.

The government is maintaining strict **silence** about the attack.

In 1982, I gave a **talk** about racism in Britain on the Channel 4 programme *Opinions*.

With some of these nouns, especially *adage*, *advice*, *claim*, *cliché*, *comment*, *debate*, *information*, *nonsense*, *remark*, *suggestion*, *talk*, and *warning*, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The only way to find out what he was doing was to bang on his door and risk his acerbic **comments** about disturbing his work.

For more **information** about using your gas appliances economically contact your local office.

With some of these nouns, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **N about n -ing**.

You lied to me! All that **garbage** about a car breaking down...

He said Government **warnings** about girls suffering vitamin deficiency from not eating meat were ridiculous.

With some of these nouns, especially *advice*, *debate*, *discussion*, *information*, *instructions*, *question*, and *suggestion*, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

This will at least start a **debate** about what should be done.

People are asking a lot more **questions** about how beef is produced.

accusation	chat	evidence	interview
adage	claim	fact (usu plural)	joke
advice	cliché	garbage	lecture
allegation (usu plural)	comment	gen	lie
announcement	complaint	generalization	material 4
assurances	conversation	gossip	message
banter	criticism	hint	myth 2
boast	debate	information	news
call 7	details	inquiry	nonsense
cant	discussion	instructions	observation

Nouns

point /	report	secret	suggestion
prediction	reticence	signals	talk >4,5,>8
protest	revelation	silence	truth
query	rhetoric	speech >	warning
question 1,5	rubbish	statement	word 4,8
remark	rumour	stuff 1	

2 THE 'STORY' GROUP

These nouns refer to something such as a piece of writing, a broadcast, a film, or a drama, or to part of one.

Your **article** about MPs' salaries was unfair and contained unjustified comments.

My husband's brother and I are collaborating on a **film** about my father.

It's a **story** about a poor peasant girl who falls in love with a wealthy prince.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Also, I'm reading 'Getting to Know Waiwai', Alan Tormald Campbell's wonderfully accessible **book** about living with an Amazonian people for two years.

On their new album 'Let's Knife' they have a **song** about wanting to be a cat.

With some of these nouns, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N about n-ing.

Mr Landers should read the Lygoe Report, particularly the **bit** about the prison service being the most complex organisation he has ever encountered.

'The Heart of It' is a powerful, multi-layered **novel** about a man coming to terms with his past.

With some of these nouns, especially *article*, *book*, *programme*, and *report*, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

This is a **book** about how we learn things.

anecdote	essay	novel	series
article	fable	part	show
bit	film	passage	song
book	leaflet	piece	story
chapter	letter	play	tale
comedy	line 7	poem	yarn
documentary	movie	programme	
drama	myth 1	report	

3 THE 'IDEAS' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings, thoughts, opinions, or attitudes.

'They have strong **feelings** about politics,' we were told.

During the early years of this century, Sigmund Freud began developing his **ideas** about the childhood causes of mental disturbance.

Small-business executives, too, continued to express **pessimism** about the economy and its prospects.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

This adds to Airbus's **nervousness** about going ahead on its own with such a project.

With some of these nouns, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group

and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N about n-ing.

There must be serious **doubts** about him going now.

With many of these nouns, especially *anxiety*, *confusion*, *decision*, *doubt*, *ideas*, *knowledge*, *opinion*, *speculation*, *theory*, *uncertainty*, *view*, and *worry*, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

There are several **theories** about how the virus damages the body's ability to defend itself.

There is still great **uncertainty** about how many of the refugees will want to return.

alarm	expectations	phobia
ambivalence	fantasy	qualm (usu plural)
anxiety	fear (usu plural)	question 4
apprehension	feeling 2,8	regret
assumption	guilt	resentment
attitude	hysteria	reservation
awareness	ideas	scepticism
belief	ignorance	scruples
certainty	illusion	second thoughts
complacency	inference (usu plural)	sensitivity
concern	judgement	sentiments
conclusion (usu plural)	knowledge	speculation
confusion	misconception	suspicion
cynicism	misgivings	theory
decision	misunderstanding	thoughts
deduction	nervousness	uncertainty
doubt	opinion	unease
dream	optimism	unhappiness
embarrassment	perception (usu plural)	view (usu plural)
excitement	pessimism	worry (usu plural)

4 THE 'DISAGREEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to disagreements or arguments.

But there is still significant **disagreement** about the electoral system to be used.

A chauffeur for a top union boss went berserk with a secretary during a **row** about overtime.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N about n-ing.

I knew there was a lot of **controversy** about Lanny picking me and I knew if I didn't play well I'd hear about it.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

There's some **dispute** about what the real origins of the game are, which I suppose is understandable.

argument	disagreement	quarrel
conflict	dispute	row
controversy	fight	squabble

5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

The experience taught me an unforgettable **lesson** about violence: it doesn't work.

We want more **openness** about public affairs in every sphere of life.

Nouns

Two in five said **publicity** about assaults on women drivers had scared them into action.
In the case of *fuss*, *lesson*, and *problem*, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Don't worry too much if your toddler makes a **fuss** about going to bed.

In the case of *fuss*, *problem*, and *publicity*, the preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **N about n -ing**.

Why all the **fuss** about lads wearing earrings at school?

ambiguity	lesson 2	publicity
discovery	openness	
fuss	problem	

Other related pattern

the **N about n be that**

See Section 42, Other related patterns.

23 N against n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *against* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **N against -ing**.

	Noun	against	noun group / -ing clause
the	battle	against	a forest fire
a	campaign	against	drug traffickers
an	insurance	against	hard times
a	precaution	against	falling asleep

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ATTACK' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BROADSIDE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PROTECTION' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CHARGE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'ANGER' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ARGUMENT' GROUP
- 7 THE 'GAME' GROUP
- 8 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ATTACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to fighting or opposing someone or something, or attempting to harm someone.

He told reporters that the **attack** against him illustrated that the Red Army Faction was still at large.

He announced a continuation of the **campaign** against drink-driving.

Serious **crime** against tourists is rare, and when it happens it causes genuine shock.

The film has been banned here as an **offence** against national pride, dignity and honour.

The diplomat was said to have been involved in an assassination **plot** against dissidents living in the United States.

Why has Britain abandoned its Commonwealth friends in their **resistance** against French nuclear testing?

The **struggles** against racism and fascism are once again moving to the top of the political agenda.

They accuse him of conducting a **witch-hunt** against other writers.

action 1,6	coup	petition 1	revolution
agitation >1	crime	plot	stand 8
alliance	crusade 1	policy	strike 8
assault 1	demonstration 1	protest	struggle 2
attack 1	drive 17	raid >1	uprising
backlash	fight >1	reaction 2	vendetta
battle 3	measure 6	rebellion	violence
blow 5	offence	resistance	vote 1,2
campaign 1	offensive	revenge	war 3
conspiracy	onslaught	revolt	witch-hunt

There are also the nouns *campaigner*, *crusader*, and *fighter*, which refer to a person who opposes something.

Professor Donald was also a staunch **campaigner** against what he saw as unnatural experiments with the unborn child.

2 THE 'BROADSIDE' GROUP

These nouns refer to statements saying bad or critical things about someone or something.

Mr Beregovoy's speech featured a startling **broadside** against the IMF and the World Bank.

The summit was overshadowed in Britain by a public **outcry** against the government's decision to let British Coal close more than half its pits.

In the case of *warning*, the preposition *against* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Major Ramsden issued a strong **warning** against shooting camels, which are often used for racing in Saudi Arabia and can be extremely valuable.

accusation 1	libel	slogans	warning
allegation	outburst	speech	
assault 5	outcry	statement	
broadside	protest	stricture	

3 THE 'PROTECTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions or things which protect someone or something from something.

A hot foot bath is the best preventive **measure** against colds.

The Ministry of Defence said it was taking all possible **precautions** against the use of chemical or biological warfare.

A widely-used sunscreen prevented sunburn but did not give much **protection** against skin cancer, a researcher said yesterday.

As a **safeguard** against racial bias, defence lawyers will be able to test prospective jurors on their racial views.

In the case of *defence, insurance, insurance policy, precaution, and protection*, the preposition *against* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Residents of the area have been warned to take **precautions** against contracting the disease.

barrier 1	defence 4	insurance	safeguard
bastion	hedge 3	insurance policy	vaccination
buffer 1	immunization	measure 6	vaccine
bulwark	inoculation	precaution	
cushion	insulation	protection	

4 THE 'CHARGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to formal or legal actions, statements, or decisions.

Last week the state dropped the **charges** against four of the accused.

The case involves a **claim** against the defendants over an agreement said to have been made in 1982.

The Italian authorities have lifted deportation **orders** against nearly two hundred and fifty English football fans.

He was ordered to appear in the High Court after Customs and Excise officials filed a **petition** against him.

In the case of *edict, law, and rule*, the preposition *against* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

But somebody shopped them and they were fired under British Rail's strict **rule** against drinking on duty.

In the case of *law*, the preposition *against* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **N against n-ing**.

Prison authorities say there is no **law** against a prisoner conducting business affairs while doing time.

accusation 2	complaint 1	judgement	rule
action 3	decision	law	ruling
ban	edict	lawsuit	sanction 2
boycott	embargo	legislation	verdict
charge 4	indictment 2	order 2,4	writ
claim >10	injunction 1	petition 2	

5 THE 'ANGER' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings and attitudes, usually negative or undesirable ones.

Our society's **discrimination** against women pervades all of its institutions.

The fact that he came from humble circumstances hasn't given him a **grudge** against the more privileged.

The universal **revulsion** against poisonous gas put an end to its use in war.

anger	grudge	resentment
bias	prejudice	revulsion
discrimination	reaction 3	stance

6 THE 'ARGUMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to arguments or evidence.

Heseltine was the first chap I'd heard to spell out the **case** against public schools.

In the case of *argument* and *case*, the preposition *against* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The British Government has been given until the beginning of December to put its **arguments** against proceeding with the case.

argument 4	defence 7
case 5	evidence 2

7 THE 'GAME' GROUP

These nouns refer to games, victories, or defeats.

Japan have had only one win from eight **matches** against Australia.

Parker moved ahead of him with a convincing **win** against Charles Cobb.

clash >5	match	win
defeat	play-off	
game	victory	

8 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Rosemary West is to lodge her **appeal** against her conviction on 10 charges of murder.

The average **swing** against the government in by-elections during the past 15 years is only 4 to 5 percent.

After making **threats** against the rest of the family, Mann fled.

appeal 5	strike 23	threat 1,2
odds	swing 8	

24 N among pl-n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *among* and a plural noun group.

This pattern is productive. The nouns listed here are the ones which are most frequently used in this way.

Noun	among	plural noun group
confusion	among	customers
enthusiasm	among	voters
a reputation	among	his colleagues

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FEAR' GROUP
- 2 THE 'CONSENSUS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CONFLICT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'COMMUNICATION' GROUP
- 5 THE 'POPULARITY' GROUP
- 6 THE 'UNEMPLOYMENT' GROUP
- 7 THE 'ILLNESS' GROUP
- 8 THE 'DIFFERENCES' GROUP
- 9 THE 'FRIENDS' GROUP
- 10 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'FEAR' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings, attitudes, or views that people have. Most of them refer to specific attitudes or feelings, but *attitude*, *belief*, *conviction*, *feeling*, *mood*, *reaction*, *sense*, *sentiment*, and *view* are more general.

At Demos, the independent think-tank, Helen Wilkinson has studied changing *attitudes* among young women and young men.

The judgment is likely to cause *confusion* among doctors faced with advising patients about the risk of vaccinations.

The *fear* among many is that the Barings Bank collapse may not be the last.

The American interest rate cut increased *optimism* among investors, and shares rallied in New York.

The cutbacks have sparked *outrage* among the officers' union, the Australian Federal Police Association.

Mentality is always preceded by an adjective, noun, or phrase.

This has generated a 'now-or-never' *mentality* among potential bidders.

acceptance	disaffection	insecurity	recognition
alarm	discontent	interest	reluctance
anger	disquiet	jealousy	resentment
anxiety	dissatisfaction	loyalty	sense
apathy	doubt	mentality	sentiment
attitude	enthusiasm	mood	suspicion
awareness	excitement	morale	sympathy
belief	expectation	nervousness	tension
bitterness	fear	opposition	uncertainty
concern	feeling	optimism	understanding
confidence	frustration	outrage	unease
confusion	fury	panic	view
conviction	indignation	reaction	worry

Many of these nouns often or sometimes have the pattern *N among pl-n* combined with another pattern, which is used to mention the content or topic of the feeling, attitude, or view.

There is, though, a deep-seated *belief* among leading clubs that a parting of the ways is inevitable.
(*N among pl-n* that)

But staff shortages and a *reluctance* among doctors to work at night have threatened the future of the centre.

(*N among pl-n* to-inf)

There was a lot of *resentment* among the players about him being reinstated as an amateur.

(*N among pl-n* about n-ing)

Carlson sees signs of a growing *awareness* among women of the iniquities of the present system.

(*N among pl-n* of n)

2 THE 'CONSENSUS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a state in which people are in agreement or are working or living together in harmony.

There is no *consensus* among us.

Woolf was very conscious of the need for greater *cooperation* among the various parts of the criminal justice process.

It is a body of people who meet once a month to pray for *unity* among Christians.

agreement	cooperation	sense of community	understanding
cohesion	harmony	solidarity	unity
consensus	peace	unanimity	

In the case of *agreement*, the pattern *N among pl-n* is usually combined with other patterns.

I think there is general *agreement* among academics that there is a serious problem.
(*N among pl-n* that)

3 THE 'CONFLICT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a fight, argument, or contest.

But *competition* among females is also intense in many species.

There is some *conflict* among different racial groups at the school but the main problem is bullying.

It would serve as a forum for the exchange of military information and the settlement of *disputes* among CSCE members.

competition	disagreement	fighting	struggle
conflict	dispute	infighting	violence
controversy	dissension	rivalry	war
differences	divisions	split	

4 THE 'COMMUNICATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to communication or transactions involving several people or groups.

All of the candidates appear to share a common desire to improve *communication* among the board, staff and parents.

The artworks stimulated *discussion* among the patients, and they shared advice and offered support to one another.

In a recent paper, the three looked at *trade* among 63 countries between 1965 and 1990.

communication	debate	negotiations	trade
consultation	discussion	relations	
conversation	interaction	talk	

5 THE 'POPULARITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to the state of being liked or respected by people.

Though government officials carefully monitored his movements, his **popularity among the people** remained indisputable.

Under Col's expert hands, nose and eyes, the Kenilworth product has earned an enviable **reputation among cheese connoisseurs**.

She has strong **support among the youth and women's sections of the Social Democrats**.

Reputation may also refer to the state of not being liked.

Southern Italy, particularly the area around Naples, has a bad **reputation among yachtsmen**.

appeal	popularity	respect	success
credibility	reputation	status	support

There are also three nouns which refer to a person or thing that is liked or respected.

He lifted the team during those late minutes, and it is obvious he is a **favourite among our supporters**.

Choice and figure are always preceded by an adjective.

McPartland was never a household name, but he was a **powerful figure among those who know and love jazz**.

choice 2	favourite	figure 7,8
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6 THE 'UNEMPLOYMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to problems, especially social problems.

Military leaders said **corruption among ministers** was a major reason for the coup early this year.

This is a common **problem among small firms** and one that can limit innovation and growth.

The Holland Report followed in 1977 and concentrated on the problem of **unemployment among young people**.

Rate and use are usually preceded by another noun.

Yet still the **divorce rate among Asians** is rising.

The study found that **drug use among young people** is widespread.

corruption	problem	unrest
crime	rate	use
poverty	unemployment	violence

7 THE 'ILLNESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to illness or death.

The study finds that smoking-related **deaths among women in the United States and other industrialized nations** are rising.

He says common **illnesses among patients** are bronchitis, laryngitis, conjunctivitis and sinusitis.

cancer	illness	suicide
death	mortality	
disease	stress	

There is also one noun, **casualties**, which refers to people who have been hurt.

The government claimed there were heavy **casualties among the guerrillas**.

8 THE 'DIFFERENCES' GROUP

These nouns refer to differences or similarities between things.

It tended to ignore the temperamental and psychic **differences among human beings**.

differences	similarities	variation
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9 THE 'FRIENDS' GROUP

These nouns refer to people who are part of a larger group.

This tactic won him a **following among embittered war veterans**.

Although he has many **friends among the Tories**, he believes that a Labour government will be good for business and good for the country.

Elements is usually preceded by an adjective.

Mr Roman, who was addressing a news conference, conceded there were some **bad elements among the miners**.

elements 3	friends
following	supporters

There is one noun, **giant**, which refers to one member of a group.

After his stroke, he kept his humour and strong character, and remained a **giant among men**.

10 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Rotherham, together with Leeds, are demonstrating a strong desire to claim a **place among the country's leading clubs**.

A **survey among secondary schoolchildren** revealed that last year 12 per cent of 11- to 15-year-olds in England regularly smoked.

In 1979 she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her **work among the poorest of the poor in Calcutta**.

Behaviour and issue are usually preceded by an adjective.

'Good street lighting also seems to cut down on **disorderly behaviour among youths**,' says Dr Painter.

backlash	issue	position 4,6	tendency
behaviour	joke	practice 1,7	trend
common knowledge	place 9	standards	work
complaint	poll	survey	

Tendency usually has the pattern N among pl-n to-inf.

There's a **tendency** among politicians and journalists to make things out to be worse than they are.

25 N as n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *as* and a noun group.

	Noun	as	noun group
his	appointment	as	team manager
an	apprenticeship	as	a glass-maker
his	election	as	chairman
a	responsibility	as	a businessman

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'APPOINTMENT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'EXPERIENCE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'REPUTATION' GROUP
- 4 THE 'FUTURE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'RIGHTS' GROUP
- 6 THE 'PERFORMANCE' GROUP
- 7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'APPOINTMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to the having, getting, or losing of a job or role.

In her **career** as a ballerina she has worked all over the world.

The Wests offered Miss Owens a **job** as their nanny and she accepted and moved in to Cromwell Street.

He says he wants to marry and is looking for a wife who will understand and support his new **mission** as a social worker.

His **position** as leader may not last much longer.

Rex Harrison was best known for his **role** as the pompous Henry Higgins in the musical *My Fair Lady*.

In the case of nouns that indicate something that someone does, such as *resignation*, or something that is done to someone, such as *selection*, the noun always follows a possessive such as *his* or *her*. This pattern is *poss N as n*.

The responsible course of action would be for you to announce your immediate **resignation** as national president.

appointment	capacity	election	instalment <2>
apprenticeship	career	employment	job

mission	promotion	selection	work
position	resignation	suspension	
post	role	title	

In the case of those nouns that have the pattern *poss N as n*, the possessive may occur as a prepositional phrase beginning with *of* that comes after the noun and before the preposition *as*. This pattern is *N of n as n*.

No one in Los Angeles city government has confirmed the **selection** of Willie Williams as LA's next chief of police.

There are also two nouns which refer to someone who had or has a job or role. They have the pattern *poss N as n*.

Joe Smith, my **predecessor** as chairman, had just had some minor surgery.

predecessor	successor
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2 THE 'EXPERIENCE' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with abilities or qualifications.

His **experience** as an administrator was often called upon but he sensibly rationed the amount of work that he took on.

His **pross** as a coach and super-coach was recognised early in his career.

Although Stone describes the book as 'not bad', others have been less complimentary of Costello's **talents** as a historian.

ability	experience	skill
credentials	pross	talent

3 THE 'REPUTATION' GROUP

These nouns indicate how someone or something seems or is thought of.

Her **credibility** as a politician and as a future prime minister has been irreparably eroded.

Our sex may be male, but our **identity** as men is developed through a complex process of interaction with the culture.

Donald Davie's **impact** as a critic will prove central and durable.

On Broadway she built a **reputation** as a vibrant and versatile actress.

This crisis threatens to undermine the City's **status** as the financial centre of Europe.

credibility	impact	status
identity	importance	
image	reputation	

4 THE 'FUTURE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's life, or a period of their life, often associated with a job. *Beginnings* and *origin* are also used when talking about a thing rather than a person.

Questions have been raised about his **future** as the party's nominee.

He did a five-part TV interview on **life** as a Japanese-American.

Now he wants to put his **past** as a murderer behind him.

At the end of his first **term** as president, he had taken strong action in several major domestic reform areas.

beginnings	origin	reign	term
future	past	stint	time
life	period	tenure	

5 THE 'RIGHTS' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with rights or duties.

Your **rights** as a patient are recited to you when you check into a hospital.

duty	responsibility	rights
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6 THE 'PERFORMANCE' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with how someone or something has performed or may perform in a particular role.

As harshly as they criticize her **performance** as president, most people say they still like her as a person.

Atherton's **record** as England captain reveals seven wins from 29 Test matches.

The nouns **failure** and **success** are used in two ways. They are used in the pattern **v-link a N as n** to indicate someone or something that fails or succeeds.

I knew I could be a **success** as a fighter and a human being.

They are also used in the pattern **poss N as n** to refer to the fact that someone or something fails or succeeds.

Brand knows that her **success** as a female stand-up comedian is unusual.

failure	potential	success
performance	record	

In the case of those nouns that have the pattern **poss N as n**, the possessive may occur as a prepositional phrase beginning with *of* that comes after the noun and before the preposition *as*. This pattern is **N of n as n**.

We need more research and reports on the **failure** of men as fathers and housekeepers and on the growing burdens imposed on working mothers.

7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There is one other noun, *use*, which has this pattern.

Biological history focuses on Darwin's theory and its **use** as a model for the history of life.

Other related patterns

N of n as n

See meaning groups 1 and 6 above.

poss N as n

See meaning groups 1 and 6 above.

v-link a N as n

See meaning group 6 above.

26 N as to wh

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *as to* and a finite **wh-clause**. With some nouns, the preposition is occasionally followed by a **wh-word** and a **to-infinitive clause**. This pattern is **N as to wh-to-inf**. With most nouns, the preposition is occasionally followed by a noun group. This pattern is **N as to n**.

	Noun	as to	wh-clause/wh-to-inf/noun group
a powerful	argument	as to	why reform should go ahead
	assumptions	as to	who will win
	ignorance	as to	the precise nature of the process
	suggestions	as to	where to go next

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ADVICE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'IDEA' GROUP
- 3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ADVICE' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that are spoken or written.

I wanted your **advice** as to whether I ought to tell the police.

There is much **debate** as to what causes depression, yet the reasons will differ from person to person.

There's been much **discussion** as to whether rebuilding the family is a political or a private matter.

'Can you give us any **hint** as to where she may be?' the young detective asked.

A spokesman said the plane had taken off at 10.40 yesterday morning but could give no **indication** as to why it had ploughed into the field.

There is no specific **information** as to whether a peaceful end to the situation is imminent.

I seem to remember giving you very precise **instructions** as to what the scope of your duties were.

There are conflicting **reports** as to how many soldiers were inside the camp when the attack began.

With nouns referring to discussions or suggestions, the preposition *as to* is occasionally followed by a **wh-word** and a **to-infinitive clause**. This pattern is **N as to wh-to-inf**.

There is still considerable **debate** as to how to assess the body's trace element status.

You may say I am a dreamer but I have a **proposal** as to how to pay for this extra staffing.

With most nouns in this group, the preposition is occasionally followed by a noun group.

At yesterday's briefing, Mr Meade was bombarded with **questions** as to the extent of the threat from both the volcano and the storm.

advice	details	hint	regulations
announcement	directions	indication	reports
answer	discussion	information	requirements
argument	dispute	instructions	rules
assurances	enquiry	message	statement
bet	excuse	prediction	suggestion
comment	explanation	proposal	word
confirmation	finding	query	
consultation	guidance	question	
debate	guidelines	recommendation	

2 THE 'IDEA' GROUP

These nouns refer to ideas, feelings, and thought processes.

There seems to be general agreement as to where Lynette went that night.

The problem lay in physicians' beliefs as to what caused disease.

There is some confusion as to when I was born, but the correct date is the 7th of July, 1920.

There was never much doubt as to what the outcome of the match would be.

I would awaken in the morning without any idea as to where I would sleep that night.

It must enable parents to express a preference as to the school they wish their child to attend.

There is now intense speculation as to which record company will handle Jimi's music.

In Stockholm, there is a conspiracy theory as to why the Nobel Prize never went to Graham Greene.

There has always been some uncertainty as to what exactly he said.

With nouns referring to ideas or uncertainty, the preposition *as to* is occasionally followed by a *wh*-word and a *to*-infinitive clause. This pattern is **N as to wh-to-inf**.

He appeared to be in some doubt as to what to do.

With most nouns in this group, the preposition is occasionally followed by a noun group.

We may need to reconsider our views as to the suitability of different jobs for different people.

agreement	consensus	illusions	preference
anxiety	consideration	indifference	reservations
assessment	curiosity	inkling	scepticism
assumption	decision	interpretation	speculation
calculation	determination	judgement	suspicion
certainty	disagreement	knowledge	theory
commitment	doubt	misunderstanding	thought
concern	estimate	notion	uncertainty
conclusion	hypothesis	opinion	view
confusion	idea	panic	
conjecture	ignorance	plan	

3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern. They are all abstract nouns.

He offered no clue as to who he wants to see fill the newly created post of vice-president.

Eventually, the black box of the plane was found, but it provided no concrete evidence as to what happened.

There is no mystery as to why this has happened.

He set out a number of options as to how we might proceed.

The UN official says so far there's no proof as to who's responsible.

We have never been given any reason as to why the children were not placed into our care.

In the case of *choice*, *clue*, *dilemma*, *option*, and *quandary*, the preposition *as to* is occasionally followed by a *wh*-word and a *to*-infinitive clause. This pattern is **N as to wh-to-inf**.

Turku is Finland's oldest town and offers plenty of choice as to where to eat.

With most nouns in this group, the preposition is occasionally followed by a noun group.

Meanwhile, there have been conflicting signals as to the health of the ongoing Bosnian peace talks.

ambiguity	dilemma	mystery	question 4,5
choice 1	evidence	option	question mark 2
clue 1,2	guide 6	proof	reason
criterion	issue	quandary	signals 3

27 N at n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *at* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an *'-ing'* clause. This pattern is **N at n**.

	noun	at	noun group -ing clause
	anger	at	the price increases
her	distress	at	parting from him
a friendly	smile	at	a stranger

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ANGER' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ATTEMPT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'GLANCE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'EXPERT' GROUP
- 5 THE 'DIG' GROUP
- 6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ANGER' GROUP

These nouns refer to emotions and attitudes. The prepositional phrase indicates what the emotion or attitude relates to.

Large crowds later took to the streets to express their anger at yesterday's killings.

Mr Richards had been made aware of their great displeasure at his action.

There is fury at the way the squatters have been allowed to occupy prime land free of charge.

Prince Philip has told of his sadness at the retirement of the royal yacht, Britannia.

Mr Adams has spoken of his satisfaction at the results of yesterday's local and regional elections.

The preposition *at* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

We are tortured by guilt at not being good enough.

My boyfriend seems full of joy at having made a decision about his future.

He spoke of his relief at finding his six-year-old daughter unharmed.

amazement	disbelief	glee	resentment
anger	disgust	grief	revulsion
anxiety	dismay	guilt	sadness
awe	displeasure	horror	satisfaction
bewilderment	distress	joy	shame
bitterness	embarrassment	jubilant	shock
concern	exasperation	laughter	surprise
delight	excitement	outrage	terror
despair	frustration	rage	thrill
disappointment	fury	relief	torment

2 THE 'ATTEMPT' GROUP

These nouns refer to attempts to do or get something.

Their attempt at a second honeymoon in Europe was a disaster.

Mr Downer said that despite being forced to resign, he may one day get another chance at the leadership.

The preposition *at* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

What was needed now was a sustained effort at making sanctions work.

He has made an interesting stab at creating a Budget that clearly differentiates the two parties.

attempt	crack 5	shot 6	try
bash 6	effort 1	stab 3	
chance 2	go 3.8	tilt 6	

3 THE 'GLANCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the act of looking at someone or something, either physically or metaphorically.

The island is bigger than a first glance at the map indicates.

In *The Moral Animal*, Wright takes a look at the fashionable science of evolutionary psychology.

glance	look	smile
glimpse	peek	

4 THE 'EXPERT' GROUP

These nouns indicate that someone is good or experienced at a particular activity. We include here *novice*, which indicates that someone is not experienced at a particular activity.

If you're a dab hand at DIY, why not try building a bed on a platform?

The man's an expert at what he does.

The preposition *at* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Dickens was a genius at creating characters of great depth and this film is peppered with them.

dab hand	master	past master
expert	novice	whizz
genius	old hand	wizard

5 THE 'DIG' GROUP

These nouns refer to critical comments.

It's a none-too-subtle dig at the officials of the Brisbane and Canberra clubs.

dig 7	protest	side-swipe
-------	---------	------------

6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

I was travelling home from work and an elderly drunk made a grab at my knee.

His skill at public speaking has won him many standing ovations at Conservative Party conferences.

In the case of *pretence*, *success* and *turn*, the preposition *at* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

In its early days, the school made no pretence at being academic.

In the case of *guess*, the preposition *at* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause. This pattern is N at wh.

So have a guess at who the mystery celebrity is.

grab	pretence	success
guess	skill	turn 25

28 N behind n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *behind* and a noun group.

	Noun	behind	noun group
the	genius	behind	the whole thing
the	secret	behind	his improvement
the	thinking	behind	this approach

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'MASTERMIND' GROUP
- 2 THE 'IDEA' GROUP
- 3 THE 'REASON' GROUP

- 4 THE 'SCIENCE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'FACTS' GROUP
- 6 THE 'MEANING' GROUP
- 7 THE 'LOOK' GROUP
- 8 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'MASTERMIND' GROUP

These nouns refer to a person or group that is responsible for doing something.

Paul and Malcolm have been working together for 10 years and are the **brains** behind the stunning ads for Gossard lingerie and the Economist.

The **man** behind the project was Merle Tuve, a physicist at the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

There are some who would rather she did not appear to be the **'power** behind the throne'.

With Germany, France has been the **prime mover** behind closer European integration.

Hand is usually preceded by an adjective.

He is one of the world's most wanted terrorists, and he is generally believed to be the **hidden hand** behind today's killings.

architect	genius	mind	prime mover
brains 4	group	moving spirit	team
company	hand 2	name 8	woman
figure	man	people	
force 8	mastermind	power 6	

2 THE 'IDEA' GROUP

These nouns refer to an idea, motive, or plan.

She said the **idea** behind the campaign was to show the dangers of alcohol abuse in an innovative way.

Explain the **reasoning** behind this decision to us, please.

That was the **philosophy** behind the opening of America's first children's museum, in Brooklyn in 1899.

I don't really care whether he has a **theory** behind his music.

agenda	impulse	philosophy	strategy
aim	inspiration	premise	theory
assumption	intention	principle	thinking
concept	logic	purpose	thought
idea	motivation	rationale	
impetus	motives	reasoning	

3 THE 'REASON' GROUP

These nouns refer to the cause of something.

Andrew Feist thinks there are two main **factors** behind the recovery of cinema audiences in Britain.

But the **reason** behind her disappearance – which sparked a nationwide police hunt – remains a mystery.

culprit
factor

reason
secret 3

4 THE 'SCIENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to what makes something work or happen.

Until now, no one understood the **mechanism** behind this process.

Intended for young readers, the book explores the **science** behind the art of cooking through questions such as 'Why does water boil?'

mechanism
principle

science
technology

5 THE 'FACTS' GROUP

These nouns refer to facts which are not known by everyone.

The news that he had been killed spread very quickly; the **facts** behind the tragedy took a little longer to come out.

'A Hard Day's Write' tells the **story** behind every one of the Beatles' songs.

One HarperCollins insider said directors in London tried desperately to find out the **truth** behind the rumours.

facts
history
reality

secret 2
story
substance 4

truth

6 THE 'MEANING' GROUP

These nouns refer to the meaning of something.

I try to comprehend the **meaning** behind the words.

Your reporter appears to have misinterpreted the **message** behind the advertisement concerned.

implication

meaning

message 2

7 THE 'LOOK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a look at something. They are often used metaphorically.

It provides a fascinating **look** behind the scenes at various effects used in TV and film-making.

glimpse

look

peek

8 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

James Rollo of the Royal Institute for International Affairs outlines the **issues** behind the dispute.

How can the **momentum** behind the Citizen's Charter be maintained?

Murray Walker, the **voice** behind Formula One television coverage, may be gone in 1997.

consensus	momentum	muscle 3	problem
issues	money	passion	voice

Productive use

This pattern is productive when it is used to say that someone has done, achieved, or experienced something. The noun comes after the preposition *with* or the verb *have*, as in *with this decision behind him*, *with two failed marriages behind her*, and *He has seven national titles behind him*.

29 N between pl-n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *between* and a plural noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by two '-ing' clauses joined by a conjunction.

	Noun	between	plural noun group/-ing clause
a fierce the	debate difference relations	between between between	conservatives and liberals winning and losing the two nations

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'RELATIONSHIP' GROUP
- 2 THE 'SPLIT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'FIGHT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'RECONCILIATION' GROUP
- 5 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'LOVE' AND 'ENMITY' GROUP
- 7 THE 'COMMUNICATION' GROUP
- 8 THE 'COLLABORATION' GROUP
- 9 THE 'INTERACTION' GROUP
- 10 THE 'BOUNDARY' GROUP
- 11 THE 'DIFFERENCE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'SIMILARITY' GROUP
- 13 THE 'BALANCE' GROUP
- 14 THE 'INTERVAL' GROUP
- 15 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'RELATIONSHIP' GROUP

These nouns refer to relationships or links. These are most often between people but can be between things, as in the case of *connection*, *correlation*, *link*, *ratio*, *relation*, and *relationship*.

Officials said they knew of no **link** between the two deaths.

Whitehall officials believe that the Forum is the first example of close industrial **partnership** between government and business.

The **relationship** between director and writer can be difficult.

'God's Highlander' is a 19th century tale which tells of the **romance** between a local girl and a minister.

Things between them were getting very tense.

alliance	correlation	link	romance
association	correspondence 3	linkage	sex
attachment	friendship	link-up	symbiosis
bond	interconnection	love affair	things 14
bridge 5	intermarriage	partnership	tie 10
closeness	interrelationship	ratio	union 2,4
coalition	intimacy	relation	unity
connection	liaison 3	relationship	

2 THE 'SPLIT' GROUP

These nouns refer to the end of a relationship.

However, the **breach** between Tito and Stalin in 1948 led also to a **breach** between Albania and Yugoslavia.

The Beatles were on film from New York but the **split** between John and the rest of the group had already started.

breach	rift	schism
divorce	rupture	split

3 THE 'FIGHT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a fight, argument, contest, or sports match.

A bitter **dispute** between teachers and the Detroit public school system has delayed the start of the school year there.

On Wednesday, a black youth was stabbed to death in a **fight** between pupils at the school. Their promising young centre, Nick Greenstock, will miss the **game** between England and the Western Samoans tonight because of an ankle injury.

But the illegal trade has bred **violence** between rival gangs.

Contention usually comes after another noun and the preposition of.

Even the goal of establishing reliable self-care may initially be a **point of contention** between patient and therapist.

altercation	discord	international	skirmish
argument	dispute	match	spat
battle	draw	punch-up	standoff
bout	duel	quarrel	strife
brawl	feud	race	struggle
clash	fight	row	tie 12
competition	fighting	run-off	trouble
conflict	final	scrap	tug-of-war
confrontation	fracas	scuffle	tussle
contention	friction	semi-final	violence
contest	game	shootout	war
contretemps	hostilities	shouting match	wrangle
disagreement	infighting	showdown	

There is also one noun, **battleground**, which refers to a place or thing involved in a conflict.

Over the last three days, Kibera has been a **battleground** between youths from the Nubian and Luo tribes.

4 THE 'RECONCILIATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the ending of fighting or bad feeling between two countries, groups, or people.

The President also repeated his desire to see reconciliation between Greece and Turkey over the divided island of Cyprus.

A fragile truce between Croatian and Serbian warring factions took effect today in Sarajevo.

ceasefire	rapprochement	truce
detente	reconciliation	
peace	settlement	

5 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to agreements made by two people or groups.

An agreement between the two parties is likely to be signed on 29 November.

A pact between the United States and Mexico is under negotiation.

accommodation 3	arrangement	covenant	treaty
accord	compromise	deal	understanding 5
agreement	contract	pact	

6 THE 'LOVE' AND 'ENMITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings that two or more people have towards each other.

Seeing the extraordinary chemistry between Ingrid and Bogart, many moviegoers assumed that their relationship must have continued off the set.

In reality the distrust between the two sides had been deepening for many weeks.

This resulted in years of enmity between the two families.

This movie is about love between parent and child, the kind I have not seen on the screen before.

acrimony	bitterness	feelings	rappro
affection	chemistry 3	goodwill	rivalry
affinity	confidence	harmony 1	tension
animosity	coolness	hatred	trust
antagonism	disharmony	hostility	understanding 4
antipathy	distrust	jealousy	warmth
attraction	empathy	love	
bad blood	enmity	mistrust	
bad feeling	estrangement	misunderstanding	

7 THE 'COMMUNICATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to communication with someone. We include here mediation, which refers to helping two groups to communicate.

There's not enough communication between players and referees.

The talks represent the first direct contact between the two countries since diplomatic ties were severed in 1987.

Despite desperate attempts at mediation between the two sides, Iraq's response was to launch an invasion.

Talks between Mr Major and Mr Bruton aimed at re-starting the peace process ended in deadlock yesterday.

communication	correspondence 1	exchange 3	negotiation
consultation	debate	liaison 7	summit
contact	dialogue	mediation	talks
conversation	discussion	meeting	

There are also three nouns which refer to a person who encourages communication between two groups or people.

For years Mr Tinling acted as liaison between the players and officials at Wimbledon.

intermediary	liaison 2	mediator
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8 THE 'COLLABORATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that two or more people or groups do something together, or to something that people achieve or produce together.

The collaboration between the two opera companies was made possible by the cultural atmosphere in the Soviet Union.

His account suggests there was no 'conspiracy' between the media and government in reporting the Falklands crisis.

The bond with Japan is newly strengthened through this joint venture between Liberty and Seibu, the Japanese retailing giant.

collaboration	co-operation	duet
collusion	co-ordination 1	joint effort
conspiracy	co-production	joint venture

9 THE 'INTERACTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to interaction between people or things. Reaction refers to a chemical process, and attraction and repulsion refer to physical processes.

We found that positive interaction between the teacher and the pupil is more likely to occur if it is rewarding to both parties.

A further reaction between the oxygen and the iodine generates the light.

Trade between the Romans and Indian pepper growers began in the 1st century.

attraction	interaction	reaction 6	trade
commerce	interchange	repulsion 2	transaction
dialectic	interplay	synergy	

There is also one noun, interface, which refers to the area where interaction takes place.

In particular, it will look at the interface between the pilot and the machines that fly the plane for much of the time.

10 THE 'BOUNDARY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a physical or metaphorical boundary or barrier. Demarcation can refer to a boundary or the setting of a boundary.

The Chilean defence minister has denied that there are troop movements on the border between Chile and Bolivia.

Keeping a clear **boundary** between fantasy and reality is vitally important.
 Mongolia has always served as a **buffer** between Russia and China.
 There was not always a clear **demarcation** between the various filmmaking roles.

barrier	boundary	distance 3	division
border	buffer	divide	frontier
borderline	demarcation	dividing line	line

11 THE 'DIFFERENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that two or more things, people, or groups are different, unequal, or incompatible.

The only **difference** between us is the colour of our skins.
 What accounts for the **discrepancies** between your figures and the actual numbers?
 And the **gulf** between rich and poor gets greater and greater.

With some of these nouns, especially *difference* and *contradiction*, the preposition *between* is sometimes followed by two '-ing' clauses joined by *and*.

There is no fundamental **contradiction** between pursuing personal needs and promoting the welfare of the community.

asymmetry	disjunction	division	mismatch
chasm	disparity	gap	opposition
contradiction	dissimilarity	gulf	polarity
contrast	dissonance	incompatibility	polarization
dichotomy	distance 3	inconsistency	separation
difference	distinction	inequality	split 4
differential	divergence	inequity	tension 3
discrepancy	divide	margin	variation

12 THE 'SIMILARITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that two or more things, people, or groups are similar, equal, or compatible.

The most important thing is to create visual **harmony** between the decoration and the furniture.
 There is an interesting **parallel** between Janssen's career and that of Norman Lockyer.
 On the whole, I think most visitors would be surprised at the **similarities** between the two titles rather than their differences.

Comparison usually occurs in the phrase *there is no comparison between*.

There is no **comparison** between the quality of the news in the Arab press and that in London.

affinity	convergence	harmony 3	parity
comparison 4	correspondence 3	identity	resemblance
compatibility	equality	likeness	similarity
congruence	equivalence	overlap	symmetry
continuity	fit	parallel	

13 THE 'BALANCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to situations in which the different things or forces involved are of similar size or strength.

Resolve to get a better **balance** between work, family, relaxation and sleep.
 In particular, it tried to break the **deadlock** between the US and the European Community over the issue of agricultural subsidies.

balance	equilibrium	stalemate
deadlock	impasse	

14 THE 'INTERVAL' GROUP

These nouns refer to the period of time between two events or times, or between something stopping and starting again.

He is now in such demand that he doesn't even have a **break** between films like he used to.
 New air traffic control technology can reduce the **interval** between flights to under a minute.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *between* is sometimes followed by two '-ing' clauses joined by *and*.

There is generally a **time lag** between becoming incapacitated and being able to claim on the insurance.

break	lull	time lapse
delay	pause	
interval	time lag	

15 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

This was done simply to make a **comparison** between the two systems.
 This would lead to the risk of **confusion** between the different legal functions of a driving licence and an identity card.
 You have to be a **cross** between a chess player, a commando and a top athlete.
 News of his appointment has also sparked talk of a **merger** between GUS and Next.
 The United Nations had hoped to broker a peaceful **transition** between the old Communist regime and the new Muslim government.

In the case of *analogy*, *choice*, *comparison*, and *compromise*, the preposition *between* is sometimes followed by two '-ing' clauses joined by *and* (or, in the case of *choice*, *or*).

School-leavers have a **choice** between dropping out of education at 16 and going on to university.

Division is usually used with the pattern *N of n between n*.

The **division** of education and training between two different government departments is clearly wasteful.

alternation	compromise	distance 1	merger
analogy	confusion	division 2	oscillation
choice	contact 7	encounter	toss-up
collision	cross 13	imbalance	transition
comparison 1	crossover	integration	

30 N by n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *by* and a noun group.

	Noun	by	noun group
his	dismissal	by	President Truman
an	investigation	by	the City of London Police
	paintings	by	Rembrandt
a	poem	by	Emily Dickinson

Nouns are used with this pattern very productively. They belong to two main groups:

1 ACTIONS

The craft followed a perilous route to its destination, under threat of **attack** by bandits.
 It is clearly a straightforward **attempt** by the local produce buyers to curtail competition.
 This is a typically brave and selfless **decision** by the Prime Minister.
 Their **defeat** by Scotland in Paris a fortnight ago really sapped their pride.
 This would be an unprecedented **move** by the two countries, which only resumed public high level contacts in early 1989 after a break of almost ten years.
 It's a production of enormous passion and great clarity with a magnificent central **performance** by Anja Silja.
 The game was the high point of a five-day **visit** by a North Korean sports delegation.

2 WRITTEN WORKS OR WORKS OF ART

I got the idea from a **book** by James McNair.
 But undoubtedly the most popular Christmas ballet everywhere is 'The Nutcracker' with its exquisite **music** by Tchaikovsky.
 The dramatic warnings come in a **report** by cancer experts published yesterday.
 The Tate has recently acquired **work** by the late Elizabeth Frink, William Turnbull and Barbara Hepworth.

31 N for n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *for* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

	Noun	for	noun group / -ing clause
his	bid	for	power
great	respect	for	the man
a	talent	for	spotting a bargain

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'LOVE' AND 'HATRED' GROUP
- 2 THE 'SUPPORT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'DESIRE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'SEARCH' GROUP
- 5 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP

- 6 THE 'BILL' GROUP
- 7 THE 'TICKET' GROUP
- 8 THE 'COMPENSATION' GROUP
- 9 THE 'TALENT' GROUP
- 10 THE 'BASIS' GROUP
- 11 THE 'PLAN' GROUP
- 12 THE 'CATALYST' AND 'DEATH KNELL' GROUP
- 13 THE 'TURNING POINT' GROUP
- 14 THE 'BLESSING' AND 'SETBACK' GROUP
- 15 THE 'OPPORTUNITY' GROUP
- 16 THE 'REASON' GROUP
- 17 THE 'EVIDENCE' GROUP
- 18 THE 'ADVERTISEMENT' GROUP
- 19 THE 'SUBSTITUTE' GROUP
- 20 THE 'SYNONYM' GROUP
- 21 THE 'SPOKESMAN' GROUP
- 22 THE 'INSTITUTE' GROUP
- 23 THE 'HOME' GROUP
- 24 THE 'PREPARATION' GROUP
- 25 THE 'CURE' GROUP
- 26 THE 'CLOAK' GROUP
- 27 THE 'VOGUE' GROUP
- 28 THE 'ELIGIBILITY' GROUP
- 29 THE 'REPUTATION' GROUP
- 30 THE 'CHANNEL' GROUP
- 31 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'LOVE' AND 'HATRED' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings and attitudes. The prepositional phrase indicates who or what the feeling or attitude relates to.

Their **hatred** for one another is legendary.
 Her **love** for Jim only seemed to grow stronger when he became ill.
 I have great **sympathy** for the woman who was so badly treated.
 He astonished one with his continuing **zest** for life.

Note that in the case of *fear*, the prepositional phrase refers to something or someone that is at risk, not something that is feared.

Leading human rights lawyers there have expressed **fears** for their safety and accused the government of intimidation.

admiration	disregard	liking	preference
affection	disrespect	loathing	regard
affinity	distaste	love	respect
appreciation 2	empathy	mania	reverence
aversion	enthusiasm	nostalgia	scorn
compassion	fascination	partiality	sympathy
concern	fear 7	passion	taste 9
consideration	feeling 5	pendant	weakness
contempt	fondness 3	pity	zest
disdain	hatred	predilection	

There is also one noun, *sucker*, which refers to a person with a particular attitude.

*I'm a **sucker** for anything sung in either French or Japanese.*

2 THE 'SUPPORT' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's approval, support, or permission.

*The island of Bermuda has refused **permission** for new hotels for more than a decade.*

*Figures compiled by the Labour Party show a massive increase in **support** for the party since the general election.*

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*Mr Blair is expected to tell union leaders that they do not have a **mandate** for opposing him.*

approval	endorsement	permission
authorization	go-ahead	permit
backing	mandate	support

3 THE 'DESIRE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a desire to have something.

*I never felt the slightest **desire** for revenge.*

*Yet despite her **longing** for culture and excitement, she wasn't willing to wander too far.*

Call is used with a broad negative.

*While there's no **call** for tax increases, the proposal does call for a cut in the capital gains tax.*

ache 3	desire	longing	yen
appetite 2	hankering	lust 2	
call 13	hunger 3	thirst 3	
craving	impatience 3	yearning	

There are also a few nouns which refer to a person with a desire to have something. *Audience* and *market* refer to the number of people who want something.

*There was a **market** for her work from the start.*

*Violet, we know, is a **stickler** for tidiness and a terrific cook.*

audience	glutton 2	stickler
buyer	market 2	taker

4 THE 'SEARCH' GROUP

These nouns refer to an attempt to find something or someone.

*This will not deter us in the **quest** for peace.*

*In many cases the **search** for stranded flood victims is being carried out by helicopter.*

hunt	quest
manhunt	search

5 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP

These nouns refer to an attempt to get something, for example by asking for it or fighting for it.

*Europe's airlines began a **campaign** for a unified air-traffic control system to solve congestion in the air.*

*Polish railway workers say they will extend their strike nationwide unless their **demands** for better pay are met.*

*Bear in mind that you might be inundated with **requests** for information.*

*To understand the **rush** for tickets you have to liken her position to that of Elvis Presley.*

ad	bid	cry 4.5	plea
advert 1	call 12	demand	race
advertisement 1	campaign	drive	request
agitation 3	chase 2	fight 2	run 9
appeal	claim	grab 2,7	rush 4
application	clamour	interview	scramble 3
audition	competition	offer	struggle
battle	crusade	order 2.6	

There are also a number of nouns which refer to a person who is trying to get something. *Queue* refers to a group of people.

*Michael Fallon was chosen last night as prospective Conservative **candidate** for the safe seat of Sevenoaks.*

*Mr Mugabe defeated his main **challenger** for the presidency, Mr Edgar Tekere, by a margin of five-to-one.*

*Hospital marketing director Barbara Dahill later admitted there was an unacceptably long **queue** for treatment.*

bidder	challenger	queue
campaigner	contender	
candidate	nominee	

6 THE 'BILL' GROUP

These nouns refer to requests for payment.

*Australian taxpayers have been footing the **bill** for her latest holiday.*

In the case of *bill*, *charge*, and *surcharge*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*The **charge** for sending you this advice is just 31p.*

bill	fee	surcharge
charge	invoice	

7 THE 'TICKET' GROUP

These nouns refer to documents that entitle someone to something. The prepositional phrase indicates what they are entitled to:

*Nick and I tried to persuade her to get us free **tickets** for the show, but she couldn't.*

*Recently the United States indicted him for drugs trafficking and issued a **warrant** for his arrest.*

ticket voucher warrant 2

8 THE 'COMPENSATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that are done or given because of what someone has done, for example as compensation, a reward, or a punishment.

Workers are demanding compensation for losses in pay caused by the government's anti-inflation plan.

Ferguson, who lists pigeon fancying as his main hobby, has three previous convictions for assault.

You want revenge for the death of your stepson.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Mr Thwaiter could receive up to £10 million as a reward for reporting the alleged conspiracy.

apology	conviction	payment 2	recompense
atonement	credit 6	price 2	reprisal
award	forgiveness	prize	retaliation
blame	full marks 2	punishment	revenge
compensation	gratitude	rap 5	reward

There are two nouns which refer to a person who is blamed.

She is claiming that she's been used as a scapegoat for problems that she had nothing to do with.

fall guy scapegoat

9 THE 'TALENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's natural ability with regard to something.

William was a man of discernment, with an eye for quality.

You've a talent for mathematics, it seems.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I don't have his flair for spotting winners.

aptitude	eye 3	genius	talent
bent 5	facility 3	gift 2	
capacity	feeling 11	instinct 2	
ear 2	flair	knack	

10 THE 'BASIS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a model, basis, or standard for something.

The Clapham report was a blueprint for rail safety.

The course in tourism and conservation was designed as a foundation for further study and employment.

There is no precedent for a hearing of this kind.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Trying to select a college is confusing because there is no sound basis for making a decision.

baseline 2	foundation 1	litmus test	prescription 3
basis 3	framework	model	recipe 2
benchmark	ground rule	norm 2	role model
blueprint 1	groundwork	plan 5	rule 2
criterion	idea	precedent	starting point 1
design	inspiration 3	precondition	touchstone
formula 2	instructions	prerequisite	

11 THE 'PLAN' GROUP

These nouns refer to a plan or suggestion.

It has virtually abandoned plans for further expansion.

So here is a practical suggestion for reform.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

What are the arrangements for going home?

agenda	plan	provision 2,3	strategy
arrangement	proposal	scheme	suggestion

12 THE 'CATALYST' AND 'DEATH KNELL' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that cause something to begin or come into being, or to come to an end.

But is hot weather really the catalyst for unsocial behaviour?

The clampdown on drink-driving has sounded the death knell for many isolated country pubs.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

That was the springboard for jumping into the restaurant business.

breeding ground 1	graveyard 3	seedbed 2	trigger 5
catalyst 1	ground 8	signal	
cue 3	impetus	springboard 1	
death knell	kiss of death	starting point 1	

13 THE 'TURNING POINT' GROUP

These nouns refer to an important time in the history of something or in someone's life.

He later described that experience as a turning point for him, which helped him to change and grow up.

high noon 2	high-water mark 2	turning point
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14 THE 'BLESSING' AND 'SETBACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is a good or a bad thing for someone.

This period away from work proved a real blessing for both of us.

Despite their bad press, tranquillisers are a lifeline for many people.

FA chief executive Graham Kelly said the disturbances were a major setback for English football.

Nouns

anchor 4	cold comfort	hazard	setback
blessing	consolation	headache	tonic 3
blow	difficulty	lifeline	
boon	fillip	problem	
boost	godsend	safe passage	

15 THE 'OPPORTUNITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to an opportunity to do something.

Mr Metcalfe said he was attracted to the position because it offered an **opportunity** for public service.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There is little **scope** for cutting taxes because of the precarious state of the country's finances.

chance 2	opportunity	scope
occasion 3	room 6	

16 THE 'REASON' GROUP

These nouns refer to a reason for something.

The usual **explanation** for this peculiar habit is that the birds are drying their wings after diving to search for food.

The **reason** for the change is simple.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Connie did not trouble to invent an **excuse** for going through her suitcase.

cause 3	ground 11	rationale
excuse	justification	reason
explanation 2	motive	warrant 3

17 THE 'EVIDENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to words or evidence supporting a theory or claim.

He has produced no **evidence** for his claim.

In the case of *argument*, *case*, and *evidence*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There is, of course, an **argument** for dismantling controls and regulation wherever possible.

argument 1	evidence
case 5	support

18 THE 'ADVERTISEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to advertisements. The prepositional phrase indicates the thing that is being sold or promoted.

Children are bombarded with **advertisements** for fizzy drinks, sweets and crisps.

It looked like a **trailer** for the Holiday Show.

ad	brochure	promo
advert 1	flyer 3	publicity
advertisement 1	poster	trailer 4

19 THE 'SUBSTITUTE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a substitute for something or someone.

Anyone got **change** for a pound?

I was terrified when I was sent by my agent to Vogue as a **replacement** for a girl who was suddenly taken ill.

In the case of *substitute*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

In the first place, there is no **substitute** for learning on the job.

change 13	replacement	substitute
proxy	stand-in	surrogate

20 THE 'SYNONYM' GROUP

These nouns refer to a word or phrase. The prepositional phrase indicates the thing that the word or phrase refers to, or a word or phrase that it can be used to replace.

Today 'community' tends to be a **synonym** for 'marginalised social group', implying some measure of exclusivity.

The Greek **word** for amber is 'elektron', hence 'electricity'.

With all these nouns except *nickname* and *pseudonym*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

In my profession the term 'resting' is of course, a **euphemism** for being out of work.

code word 2	name	synonym
euphemism	nickname	term
expression	pseudonym	word

This use is productive with nouns referring to languages, for example *the Russian* for cabbage.

The **French** for twice is 'bis'.

Mari is the **Japanese** for 'truth'.

21 THE 'SPOKESMAN' GROUP

These nouns refer to an employee or representative.

She remained in the background while Derek became the **front man** for Hemlock, flying from place to place and attending various conventions.

His local MP, Matthew Carrington, the Conservative **member** for Fulham, has taken up the case.

A **spokesman** for the mine company says there still has been no contact with the buried miners.

columnist	lawyer	salesman	spokesperson
front man	member 4	saleswoman	spokeswoman
High Commissioner	minister	spokesman	witness 3

22 THE 'INSTITUTE' GROUP

These nouns refer to an organization or body. The prepositional phrase indicates its purpose or area of activity.

His views were backed by Professor Tim Lang, from the **Centre for Food Policy** at Thames Valley University.

Jenny Bourne works for the **Institute for Race Relations** in London.

association	committee	movement
centre	foundation	
commission	institute	

23 THE 'HOME' GROUP

These nouns refer to a place where something belongs or is put, or where there is a lot of a particular thing.

There has been concern in the region that the Pacific might become a **dumping ground** for chemical and nuclear waste.

These bookcases are keenly priced, offering you an economical way of storing those extra books that you cannot find a **home** for.

dumping ground	home	repository
haven	1.9 hunting ground	

24 THE 'PREPARATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to preparation.

During a **rehearsal** for Cinderella two years ago, Garza tore tendons in his leg.

England will also play five other matches over two months, which will serve as a **warm-up** for the World Cup.

In the case of preparation, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

They fly right beside the Bretts Wharf tower before making a left turn in **preparation for landing**.

dress rehearsal	preparation	warm-up
groundwork	rehearsal	

25 THE 'CURE' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of getting rid of an illness or problem.

There is no **cure** for the disease, which can be fatal in children.

He described increasing commercial interest in laughter as a **remedy** for stress.

antidote	cure-all	treatment
cure	remedy	

26 THE 'CLOAK' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions or things that are intended to hide what is really going on.

But, as recent events have revealed, this secrecy was used by some as a **cloak** for dishonesty or incompetence.

A source told *The Sunday Mail* that the importer had a legitimate motor industry business which was a **front** for his illegal activities.

cloak	front
cover	18 Trojan horse

27 THE 'VOGUE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that a type of thing is very popular at present or was very popular at a particular time.

Even without considering the price and service, the **vogue** for small town-house hotels is understandable.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The RSPCA says it believes an American **craze** for keeping pigs as domestic pets could be catching on in Britain.

craze	fashion	vogue
fad	mania	

28 THE 'ELIGIBILITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to whether or not someone or something has the right qualities for doing something.

The government has altered the rules governing **eligibility** for unemployment benefit more than 30 times.

eligibility	fitness	suitability
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29 THE 'REPUTATION' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with someone's or something's reputation. We include here *byword*: if something is a byword for something, it has a reputation for that thing.

State-owned postal and telecoms services are a **byword** for inefficiency.

Danish bacon had a **reputation** for quality and uniformity.

In the case of *name* and *reputation*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Pilgrim joined Heal's in 1971, when it still had a **name** for being modern and innovative.

byword	name	reputation
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30 THE 'CHANNEL' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that something flows through, metaphorically.

Tighter regulations have made salesforces a less productive **channel** for new business.

channel	conduit	outlet
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31 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

He was sent a **cheque** for \$1.3 million which bounced – there was only seven dollars in the account.

It would, therefore, probably be useful for the public to have some **forum** for discussion.

The once-divided city has been a **magnet** for the curious since the Wall came down.

Pope John Paul said there was a **need** for a new attitude.

Baie broke the Australasian **record** for 1000m at Sandown yesterday to erase champion Schillaci and Mookta from the record book.

Mr Dennis, now a wealthy businessman, immediately issued a **writ** for libel.

In the case of the following nouns, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause: *base, date, deadline, estimate, potential, propensity, prospects, responsibility, room, space, tool, and vehicle.*

Last month's **deadline** for handing in weapons was extended until midnight on Tuesday.

Old people have an amazing **propensity** for complaining.

adjustment 1	first 4	place 12	time 12
advert 2	foil 3	potential 3	tip 11
advertisement 2	forum 1	propensity	tool 2
base 6,10	hope	prospects	treasure trove 2
candidate 3	implications	record	use 2,2,3
cheque	magnet 1	responsibility	vehicle 2
contract	marker 2	room 5	victory
date	metaphor 2	screening 06	wherewithal
deadline	necessity	setting	writ
estimate 2	need	space	
eye-opener	nomination	target 3	

Other productive uses

This pattern is used productively in two other ways.

1 It is used to say that something is intended for someone, as in a **present** for her or a **message** for Jane.

2 It is used to say that something is intended for a purpose, as in **money** for the groceries or A fork is the **tool** for the job.

Other related pattern

N for n to-inf

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for*, and a *to*-infinitive clause.

	Noun	for	noun group	to-infinitive clause
their	appeal	for	more aircraft	to be donated
a	chance	for	British audiences	to see his work
	room	for	the pudding	to expand

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP
- 2 THE 'CHANCE' GROUP

- 3 THE 'ROOM' GROUP
- 4 THE 'REASON' GROUP
- 5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP

These nouns refer to requests or demands that something be done.

He conceded mistakes, but firmly rejected **calls** for him to resign in the interest of stability.

Their **request** for him to see an outside doctor was refused.

appeal	demand	pressure 3
call 12	plea	request

2 THE 'CHANCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to an opportunity or ability to do something.

This is a great **chance** for me to get my career back on the right track.

Brigadier Roddy agreed and gave **permission** for me to leave.

chance 2	permission	right
opportunity	potential	scope

3 THE 'ROOM' GROUP

These nouns refer to what is needed for something to happen or be done.

Many years later I realised that he probably didn't have the **money** for us to eat until he was paid.

Parnell moved across the cabin, John Timson standing back to make **room** for him to pass.

There was no **time** for the pilot to give us any warning.

money	room	time
place	space	

4 THE 'REASON' GROUP

These nouns refer to a reason to do something.

Fortunately for Los Angeles, there is still one good **reason** for businesses to stay put: the strength of the rest of the local economy.

excuse	need
incentive	reason

5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

The **case** for nurses to have a greater role in patient care is strengthened by the findings of a report published today.

By 1989, there was a growing **tendency** for children to return to the parental home after periods of independence.

This is one **way** for young people to have fun without turning to alcohol and drugs.

case 5	plan	way
deadline	tendency	

32 N from n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *from* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **N from -ing**.

	Noun	from	noun group / -ing clause
a	break	from	caring for their daughter
	donations	from	local businessmen
	interference	from	the Government
a	respite	from	the burdens of office

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'DEPARTURE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ABSTENTION' AND 'RETIREMENT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'RESPITE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'SEPARATION' GROUP
- 5 THE 'FALLOUT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'RELIC' GROUP
- 7 THE 'REACTION' GROUP
- 8 THE 'HELP' AND 'OPPOSITION' GROUP
- 9 THE 'PRESENT' GROUP
- 10 THE 'MESSAGE' GROUP
- 11 THE 'PERFORMANCE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'DANGER' GROUP
- 13 THE 'EXTRACT' GROUP
- 14 THE 'VISITOR' GROUP
- 15 THE 'EMISSIONS' GROUP
- 16 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'DEPARTURE' GROUP

These nouns refer to leaving a place, or being made or allowed to leave.

He says he has not allowed himself to be bitter over his departure from the company.

There's been a mass escape from a prison in Greece.

His assault of a fellow student led to his expulsion from the University of Canberra.

banishment	exile	migration	retreat ▷2
departure	exodus	move	return
disappearance	expulsion	pull-out	secondment
emigration	extradition	release 2	withdrawal
escape	immigration	removal	

2 THE 'ABSTENTION' AND 'RETIREMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to not doing something, or ceasing to do or be involved in something.

Instead of payment he exacted promises of abstention from alcohol and tobacco.

Harlequins' Brian Moore announced his retirement from international rugby yesterday.

In the case of *break*, *exemption*, and *time out*, the preposition *from* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Dr Jim Naysmith is taking time out from heading the medical team at Cardiff rugby club to look after them.

abstention 2	disengagement	exit 4	retreat ▷3
banishment	exclusion	resignation	time out
break 14	exemption	retirement	

3 THE 'RESPITE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the state of not being affected by something bad, or no longer being affected by something bad. We include here *independence*, which refers to the state of not being controlled by another country.

Drugs meant hope of health, of longer life, of freedom from pain.

The government said the referendum on independence from Britain would be held today as scheduled.

Weather forecasters have promised a welcome respite from the heatwave with predictions that the weekend will be cooler and breezier.

In the case of *freedom*, *immunity*, *protection*, and *respite*, the preposition *from* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

International efforts to conserve the white-headed duck have led to its protection from being shot.

comeback	immunity	refuge	sanctuary
deliverance	independence	release ▷3	
escape	protection	relief 2	
freedom 3	recovery	respite	

There are also three nouns which refer to a place where someone is not affected by something bad.

Stu and Lidia Simmons's treehouse becomes their refuge from the conflicts of their Mississippi home town.

refuge 2	safe haven 3	sanctuary 1
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4 THE 'SEPARATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to separation or difference.

This is matched by a growing sense of alienation from society.

This is a radical departure from the way business has been done in the past.

In the case of *change*, the preposition *from* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

And as a change from writing geography textbooks, he wrote this account of his adventures.

alienation	descent 3	dissociation	isolation
change	detachment	divergence	separation
departure 3	deviation	divorce	

5 THE 'FALLOUT' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that happen or arise as a result of something.

Republican political consultant David Sparks agrees that the political **fallout** from the hearings will be negligible.

In the case of **proceeds**, the preposition *from* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The **proceeds** from selling the fleet would be reinvested by the company in its expanding hardware business.

fallout 2	proceeds	spin-off 1
gains	profit (usu plural)	
payoff 1	revenue	

6 THE 'RELIC' GROUP

These nouns refer to things or people that have survived into the present, although other things that existed at the same time have gone.

Even now, much of what schoolchildren are taught is a **hangover** from the country's colonial past.

Their radio communication system is a **relic** from the 1950s which keeps on breaking down.

hangover 2	legacy	survivor 4
leftover 3	relic 1	

7 THE 'REACTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the reaction that something gets.

Mr Murayama's words received a mixed **reaction** from other governments.

outcry	reception	welcome
reaction	response	

8 THE 'HELP' AND 'OPPOSITION' GROUP

These nouns refer to help or hindrance.

With **help** from Giovanni, she was able to scramble on to the terrace, where he handed the torch up to her.

Nature can look after itself without **interference** from us.

The plan has run into **opposition** from the police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

assistance	guidance	opposition
backing	help	resistance
co-operation	interference	support

Nouns which have this pattern and the pattern **N for n** also have the pattern **N from n for n**.

Ms Davies has enjoyed **support** from nationalist MPs for her campaign for a Welsh government.

Help and support also have the pattern **N from n to-inf**.

He demanded more **help** from the US to hunt down terror suspects.

9 THE 'PRESENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that someone gives you.

Hong Kong's government, helped by a substantial **donation** from the Jockey Club, is setting up a new scientific university.

The boots were expensive, a **present** from an old boyfriend.

bequest	donation	legacy	payment
concession	gift	loan	payoff 2
contribution	grant	offering	present

10 THE 'MESSAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to communication or information. The prepositional phrase usually indicates who is communicating. In the case of *data*, *evidence*, *information*, and *news*, the prepositional phrase may indicate something that is the source of the information.

The **advice** from an experienced car thief is to install an alarm.

They were acting on **information** from the Colombian national police, who knew Munoz was traveling in the United States.

His wife Marjorie received a **letter** from him last week in which he said he was being treated well.

A **message** from aliens 100 light years away would take 100 years to reach us.

The two sides are now considering a **proposal** from the United Nations on safeguarding human rights.

The video had attracted **protests** from civil liberty groups, MPs and police for profiting from voyeurism and encouraging blackmail.

Under the code, introduced last April, almost all public bodies and departments are obliged to answer **questions** from the public.

acknowledgement	criticism	message	rebuttal
advice	data	news	recommendation
announcement	demands	note	reply
apology	directive	objection	report
appeal	evidence	offer	representations 3
applause	fax	order (usu plural)	request
approach 2,3	feedback	ovation	signal
assurance (usu plural)	figures	permission	statement
bid	guarantee	plea	suggestion
call 7	hint	postcard	summons
claim	information	pressure	telegram
clearance	inquiry	proposal	warning
comment	instructions	protest (usu plural)	word
commitment	invitation	question	
complaint	leak	reassurance	
confirmation	letter	rebuff	

Nouns which have this pattern and the pattern **N for n** also have the pattern **N from n for n**.

There has been no public **apology** from Mr Mates for the time wasted and the trouble caused.

I have already turned down an **offer** from Manchester City for Nicky Summerbee.

Nouns which have this pattern and the pattern N to-inf also have the pattern N from n to-inf.

I had **instructions** from Washington to block any such initiative, and I faithfully did so for over a year.

I had to get special **permission** from the police to import the acid from Germany.

The King had rejected a **request** from the authorities to delay his return until after next month's elections.

Note that call 12 has the two patterns mentioned above, but rarely has the simple pattern N from n.

The moves follow **calls** from a growing number of senior police officers for a new national tier of detectives.

There have again been **calls** from the left to postpone these elections.

Nouns which have the pattern N from n and the pattern N that also have the pattern N from n that.

Mr Levy had accepted in principle a **proposal** from Mr Baker that they should meet in Paris in ten days' time.

There has been no **suggestion** from the security forces that either of the men was armed.

11 THE 'PERFORMANCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions in sport.

At Bristol a last-minute **goal** from Vickey Dixon gave Ipswich the narrowest of wins against Clifton.

The United States will be hoping for another fine **performance** from Andre Agassi, when he faces Thomas Muster in the singles.

display	header	save
goal	performance	

12 THE 'DANGER' GROUP

These nouns refer to danger.

The State Department said relief workers cannot operate if their lives are in **danger** from military action.

The **threat** from terrorists is at its highest for two years.

danger	risk
hazard	threat

13 THE 'EXTRACT' GROUP

These nouns refer to extracts from something such as a book or film.

That was a **clip** from Terry Gilliam's film, 'Time Bandits'.

Extracts from the biography, due to be published shortly, appear in next month's Vanity Fair magazine.

citation	excerpt	passage	scene
clip 3	extract	quotation	still
clipping	line	quote	track 4

14 THE 'VISITOR' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who comes from somewhere.

Craig Hignett, a £500,000 **signing** from Crewe three years ago, scored a 39th-minute goal.

This year an especially large number of **visitors** from Eastern Europe have arrived.

delegate	graduate	refugee	signing 2
delegation	immigrant	representative	visitor

15 THE 'EMISSIONS' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that are produced from something.

The only **emissions** from the refinery chimney would be water and carbon dioxide.

emissions	leak	pollution
fumes	output	

16 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

During her **absence** from the stage, she began her own theatrical agency.

I see this debate as a **distraction** from the real issues.

His company specialises in fashions and handicraft **imports** from India.

Many **sufferers** from arthritis claim that their joints ache more in cold, wet weather.

There have also been fewer **thefts** from cars.

He'd just had a **visit** from the trading standards officer.

absence	death	imports	view 4
blow 1,1	death toll	omission	visit
challenge >5	distraction	sufferer	
competition 1,3	exports	sympathy	
damage	fall >1	theft	

Other related patterns

N from n for n

See meaning groups 8 and 10 above.

N from n to n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with from and another prepositional phrase beginning with to.

	Noun	from	noun group	to	noun group
the current	shift	from	optimism	to	gloom
the	transition	from	school	to	university

Nouns with this pattern refer to a change from one thing or state to another.

Lower income tax, combined with a **shift** from taxation on earning to taxation on spending, would increase incentives.

In the case of *shift*, *switch*, and *transition*, the prepositions may be followed by '-ing' clauses.

There are many benefits from making the **switch** from working for someone else to being self-employed.

change	move >7, >10	shift	transformation
crossover 2	passage 6	switch	transition

N from n that

See meaning group 10 above.

N from n to-inf

See meaning groups 8 and 10 above.

33 N in n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *in* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

	Noun	in	noun group / -ing clause
our	faith	in	ourselves
a	rise	in	interest rates
an important	role	in	setting trends

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'INCREASE' AND 'DECREASE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'INVOLVEMENT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'INGREDIENT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'TURNING POINT' GROUP
- 5 THE 'ERA' GROUP
- 6 THE 'SETBACK' GROUP
- 7 THE 'BREAK' GROUP
- 8 THE 'HOLE' GROUP
- 9 THE 'FLAW' GROUP
- 10 THE 'PAIN' GROUP
- 11 THE 'DIFFERENCE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP
- 13 THE 'PRIDE' GROUP
- 14 THE 'SKILL' GROUP

- 15 THE 'COURSE' GROUP
- 16 THE 'CAREER' GROUP
- 17 THE 'EXPERIMENT' GROUP
- 18 THE 'TRADE' GROUP
- 19 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'INCREASE' AND 'DECREASE' GROUP

These nouns refer to an increase, decrease, or change.

I'm not worried about this **decline** in sales over such a relatively short period.

The **fall** in unemployment, he says, has slowed significantly since the beginning of the year.

The statistics pointed to an **increase** in crime in the downtown districts.

I kept hoping that the next month, the next year, would see an **upturn** in my fortunes.

acceleration	diminution	innovation	slowdown
adjustment	dip >7	jump >6	slump >1
advance	downturn	leap 4	surge
alteration	drop >1	lessening	transformation
boom 2	explosion	moderation >5	trend
bulge 5	fall	pick-up 2	turn 19
change	falling-off	reduction	turnabout
collapse	flare-up	relaxation 2	turnaround
cut >7, >9	fluctuation	resurgence	upsurge
cutback	gain	reversal	upswing
decline	growth 2	rise 10	upturn
decrease	improvement	shake-up	
dent 4	increase	shift	
deterioration	increment	slip >7	

2 THE 'INVOLVEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to involvement in something.

She hopes to do this by gaining a **foothold** in the fashion industry.

He is vehemently opposed to state **interference** in anything.

He's also been accused of **involvement** in some of the later coup attempts.

In the case of the following nouns, the preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause: *assistance*, *complicity*, *help*, *interest*, *investment*, *involvement*, *part*, *participation*, *role*, *share*, *stake*, *vested interest*, *voice*.

He was locked in a cage for a month for his **part** in planning an uprising of prisoners and locals.

Lead is always preceded by the determiner *the*.

Two years later she played the **lead** in 'National Velvet'.

absorption 3	immersion 1	involvement	share 1,9
assistance	interest 8	lead 17	stake 4
complicity	interference	part 1,7	toehold
foothold	intervention	participation	vested interest
help	investment	role 1	voice 3

There are also a number of nouns which refer to someone who is involved in something.

Had he lived, it is likely that he would have become a dominating **force** in British politics.

Older children are encouraged to become active **participants** in their own healing process.
It would be easy for cynics to regard him as a mere **pawn** in the game being played out before the world's press.

In the case of **partner** and **prime mover**, the preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an 'ing' clause.

The Prime Minister has said Britain intends to be an enthusiastic **partner** in building the Europe of the future.

contender	partner	prime mover
force 8	pawn 3	shareholder
participant	player 3	stakeholder

3 THE 'INGREDIENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is involved in or part of something else.

Poverty is definitely a **factor** in homicide.

Romance is an essential **ingredient** in life.

component	factor	ingredient 2
element	fixture 3	keystone 2

4 THE 'TURNING POINT' GROUP

These nouns refer to an event in the history of something, or in someone's life.

Now under development, the treatment could be a **breakthrough** in the treatment of cancer.

'The experience,' records Lees-Milne in his autobiography, 'was a **turning-point** in my life.'

The event was a **watershed** in the history of Kazakhstan.

breakthrough	high point	turning point
development	landmark 2	watershed

5 THE 'ERA' GROUP

These nouns refer to times that are seen as part of history or part of something that is progressing.

It marks the dawning of a new **era** in rail travel.

This is a crucial **moment** in history.

All industrial products must be subjected to an environmental assessment at an early **stage** in their development.

age	era	point
chapter 2	moment	stage
epoch	period	time

6 THE 'SETBACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a problem affecting the course of something.

Goalkeeper Nigel Spink has suffered a **setback** in his bid to regain the first-team place at Aston Villa.

hiccup 1 setback stumbling block

7 THE 'BREAK' GROUP

These nouns refer to the stopping of something, often temporarily.

The stars were told the dramatic sacking news during a **break** in filming on the Spanish set yesterday afternoon.

The Inquiry found that there was a total **breakdown** in communications between agencies.

Other sources say people are taking advantage of a **lull** in the fighting to get out of the immediate war zone.

breach 3	hiatus	lapse 2	pause
break 14	interlude	let-up	
breakdown 1	interruption 02	lull	

8 THE 'HOLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a hole, groove, or dent.

Oh, I've got a big **hole** in my tights!

The wind has been against them, and the yacht has sprung a **leak** in the hull.

Our driver slowed up as we approached the **ruts** in the road.

chink	gap 1	hollow	rut
crack	groove	incision	slit
dent	hole 2	leak 2	

9 THE 'FLAW' GROUP

These nouns refer to a fault in something.

Families of the crew and unions maintain that the disaster was caused by structural **defects** in the vessel.

It is equally dangerous to waste time on gimmicks which do not address the fundamental **flaw** in our system.

defect	flaw	irregularity	weakness
error	gap 3	loophole	
fault	hole 4	mistake	

10 THE 'PAIN' GROUP

These nouns refer to pain or another physical feeling.

At the end of this period, she was worse and had developed a **numbness** in her fingers.

He's getting **pains** in his back.

ache	numbness	tingling
cramp	pain	

11 THE 'DIFFERENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to difference or similarity. The prepositional phrase may refer to the things that are different or similar, or to the characteristic concerned.

Is there any **difference** in meaning?

A 999 call reported that the Spurs skipper was suffering from an **imbalance** in his blood sugar levels.

There are **similarities** in their performances.

contrast	discrepancy	imbalance	similarity
difference	disparity	inconsistency	variation

12 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP

These nouns refer to belief.

She did not lose her **faith** in working people, her **belief** in Socialism and the ability of women to win equality.

belief	faith
confidence	trust

There is also one noun, **believer**, which refers to a person who believes in something. The preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I am a great **believer** in creating competition.

13 THE 'PRIDE' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings.

But her **pride** in her students is apparent, as well as her trust in their abilities.

The preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I've no **interest** in making a film in Hollywood.

delight	interest	pride
disinterest	pleasure	

14 THE 'SKILL' GROUP

These nouns refer to skill, experience, or an advantage that someone has with regard to a particular area of activity.

Presenting yourself well for an interview could give you the **edge** in today's competitive work marketplace.

This and his **skill** in battle won him fame and adulation.

The preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

We are the country that has the greatest **expertise** in dealing with these problems.

ability	expertise	prowess	superiority
edge	proficiency	skill	track record

There are also a number of nouns which refer to a person who has skill or knowledge relating to a particular area of activity.

According to Peter McIntyre, a **specialist** in infectious diseases at Sydney's Westmead Hospital, vaccinations are safe.

In the case of **expert**, **pioneer**, and **specialist**, the preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

He was a **pioneer** in writing for the young.

expert	past master	specialist
master	pioneer	

15 THE 'COURSE' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with education.

He left school at 15 to do a **course** in engineering.

Joan has a **degree** in English and history and is hoping to take a job in community work.

In 1976 I moved to Norwich to take up a **lectureship** in English literature at the University of East Anglia.

chair	degree	lectureship	qualification
class	diploma	lesson	training
course	first	pass	tuition
crash course	grounding	professorship	

There are also four nouns which refer to a person connected with education.

Mr Dinar is a **graduate** in public and international law.

graduate	professor
lecturer	tutor

16 THE 'CAREER' GROUP

These nouns refer to employment.

Like Clinton, Gore began planning for a **career** in politics when he was very young.

career	employment	job
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17 THE 'EXPERIMENT' GROUP

These nouns are used to describe an action or attempt.

The **experiment** in democracy was short-lived.

In the case of **exercise**, **lesson**, and **object lesson**, the preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

This has been an **exercise** in choosing between lesser evils to limit the damage such cuts inevitably cause.

In the case of **lesson** and **object lesson**, the preposition is sometimes followed by a **wh**-clause.

The report describes the campaign as 'an **object lesson** in how to make the worst possible use of our assets'.

essay	experiment	object lesson
exercise	lesson	

18 THE 'TRADE' GROUP

These nouns relate to commercial transactions.

The Mozambican government has decided to implement the international ban on trade in ivory.

market 2 trade traffic 3

19 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

The last dated entry in this diary is July 19, 1991.

His taste in music is great.

The committee has also called for a ban on its use in fish feed.

In the case of delay, difficulty, irony, progress, success, and tardiness, the preposition is sometimes or always followed by an '-ing' clause:

General Stevens apologized for the delay in getting the information to the press.

It will link the income of hospitals to their success in attracting patients.

acquiescence	entry 4,7	presence	success
blockage	immersion 2	progress	tardiness >2
delay	irony 2	rarity 1	taste 10
difficulty	kink 1	split >2	use 2,3

34 N in favour of n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *in favour of* and a noun group. With a few nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is *N in favour of-ing*.

	Noun	<i>in favour of</i>	noun group/-ing
the	case	in favour of	the death penalty
their	consensus	in favour of	keeping troops there
a	prejudice	in favour of	famous names
his recent	statements	in favour of	compromise

Many nouns with this pattern also have the pattern *N in poss favour* – that is, the noun can be followed by *in*, a possessive such as *his* or *Britain's*, and *favour*, as in *The only argument in its favour was that it worked*. These nouns are marked with *.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'BIAS' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DECISION' GROUP
- 3 THE 'POINT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'SPEECH' GROUP
- 5 THE 'DEMONSTRATION' GROUP
- 6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'BIAS' GROUP

These nouns refer to bias.

You are displaying enormous bias in favour of the Government.

Discrimination in favour of men might be needed to restore a balance.

bias prejudice
discrimination presumption 1

2 THE 'DECISION' GROUP

These nouns refer to formal decisions.

A decision in his favour would give a fresh boost to his drive to regain the premiership.

An appeal court in Japan has upheld a ruling in favour of a doctor who lied to a patient about her condition.

decision* ruling*
judgement 3* verdict*

3 THE 'POINT' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that shows or means that something is good or true in some way.

However, there is more evidence in favour of the idea that fitness and exercise prolong life than there is against.

In the case of *argument* and *case*, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

We were also pleased to see that you acknowledge the arguments in favour of including children with disabilities in regular classrooms.

In the case of *point* and *thing*, the pattern *N in poss favour* is more frequent than *N in favour of n*.

But there is one big point in its favour – it costs less than £1.

argument 1* evidence* thing*
case 5* point 5*

4 THE 'SPEECH' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that are said.

Sir Mark praised Governor-General Bill Hayden's speech in favour of euthanasia on Wednesday night.

resolution speech*
slogans statement

5 THE 'DEMONSTRATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions that support something or someone.

Right across the country, in the first months of 1946, there were demonstrations in favour of Franco organized by the Movimiento.

In the case of *vote*, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

An unofficial 'referendum' last Sunday produced a 97 per cent vote in favour of putting the former president on trial for his role in the economic crisis.

action campaign*	demonstration* petition	policy vote*
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6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

In Japan, the consensus in favour of an autumn election is remarkable: all the main national newspapers have called for one.

In the case of consensus and majority, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Most opinion polls show a majority in favour of preserving the federation.

consensus imbalance*	majority* swing *
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35 N into n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *into* and a noun group.

	Noun	into	noun group
their	entrance	into	the war
their	incursion	into	the exclusion zone
the	inquest	into	the deaths of two firefighters

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ENTRY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DESCENT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'FORAY' GROUP
- 4 THE 'INVESTIGATION' GROUP
- 5 THE 'TRANSFORMATION' GROUP
- 6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ENTRY' GROUP

These nouns refer to entering a place or group.

The clause would take away the right of appeal from visitors refused entry into Britain.

Ali had refused to report for induction into the armed forces because of his religious beliefs.

absorption 2	entrance 1,3,5	incorporation	initiation
acceptance	entry 1,2,3	incursion	integration
admittance	foray 2,3	induction 1	raid
assimilation	immigration	influx	

2 THE 'DESCENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to entering a state or situation.

Rose's long descent into insanity began in 1928.

The result will often be a relapse into greater weakness.

decline	lurch	retreat >3
descent 3	plunge >3	slide
lapse >4	relapse	transition

3 THE 'FORAY' GROUP

These nouns refer to getting involved in something. In the case of intrusion, this involvement is unwelcome.

Mr Amato's first foray into politics has been a failure.

The purpose of a privacy law would be to protect ordinary citizens from intrusion into their private affairs.

diversification	excursion 3	intrusion 2	venture
entrance 1,6	expansion	plunge >4	
entry 3	foray 1	push	

4 THE 'INVESTIGATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to an investigation into something.

The official investigation into the affair, which has cost more than seven million pounds, will continue.

The charity is campaigning for more research into the effects of these drugs.

hearing	inquiry	probe	research
inquest	investigation	report	study

5 THE 'TRANSFORMATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to something changing.

Mr Dimitrov hopes to speed up Bulgaria's transformation into a market economy.

In the case of division, the preposition *into* is always followed by a plural noun group.

A territorial division into three ethnic-based states is almost inevitable.

conversion	division 1	transformation
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6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

He followed her line of sight across the clearing to the small entrance into the disused mine, now heavily overgrown.

Family money had given Wang an entrée into the cosmopolitan life of the city.

The survey will give a unique insight into late 20th century British attitudes and living conditions.

entrance 1.1	glimpse	input
entrée 1	injection	insight

36 N of n

N of n is a very frequent noun pattern in English. The lists below contain only nouns which are among the 5000 most frequently occurring nouns in the Bank of English.

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *of* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause. These patterns are N of-ing and N of *wh*.

	Noun	of	Noun group/-ing clause/ <i>wh</i> -clause
the	advantage	of	having many years' experience
the	arrival	of	the refugees
an	article	of	clothing
a	box	of	matches
	details	of	how it works

Many nouns that are typically or sometimes preceded by a *possessive* are sometimes used with the pattern N of n, especially if the noun group which refers to the person who has something is a long one, as in *the grand-daughter of a very old friend of mine*. See Section 15.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ANNOUNCEMENT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'CONSTRUCTION' GROUP
- 3 THE 'LOVE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'DIAGRAM' GROUP
- 5 THE 'SIGN' GROUP
- 6 THE 'CAUSE' AND 'RESULT' GROUP
- 7 THE 'RISE' AND 'FALL' GROUP
- 8 THE 'FLOW' GROUP
- 9 THE 'SUPPORT' GROUP
- 10 THE 'ISSUE' GROUP
- 11 THE 'MAGNITUDE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'TOWN' GROUP
- 13 THE 'LOOK' GROUP
- 14 THE 'ERA' GROUP
- 15 THE 'PIECE' GROUP
- 16 THE 'GANG' GROUP
- 17 THE 'BOX' GROUP
- 18 THE 'KILOMETRE' GROUP
- 19 THE 'FRACTION' GROUP
- 20 THE 'PERCENTAGE' GROUP
- 21 THE 'ARTICLE' GROUP
- 22 THE 'SAMPLE' GROUP
- 23 THE 'EPISODE' GROUP
- 24 THE 'RIM' GROUP
- 25 THE 'STAGE' GROUP
- 26 THE 'EXTREMES' GROUP

- 27 THE 'ARCHITECT' GROUP
- 28 THE 'FRAGRANCE' GROUP
- 29 THE 'MOOD' GROUP
- 30 THE 'AIM' GROUP
- 31 THE 'SITE' GROUP
- 32 THE 'THUNDER' GROUP
- 33 THE 'POSSIBILITY' GROUP
- 34 THE 'SHORTAGE' GROUP
- 35 THE 'TYPE' GROUP
- 36 THE 'MIXTURE' GROUP
- 37 THE 'WAY' GROUP
- 38 THE 'GIANT' GROUP
- 39 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ANNOUNCEMENT' GROUP

The noun refers to communication, thought, or knowledge. The noun group after *of* indicates the subject of the communication, thought, or knowledge.

On the calendar he kept a brief account of the main events of every day.

An announcement of jobs growth indicated the economy is growing at an inflationary pace.

Two people have been arrested on charges of murder.

She voiced strong criticism of a secret trial of suspected coup plotters.

He is currently working on a life of Bertrand Russell.

In every democratic monarchy, the monarch swears an oath of allegiance to the constitution.

I have an extremely low opinion of the British tabloid newspapers.

He has reflected on his new philosophy of life, which amounts to not making a big deal of anything.

A psychological profile of the Blakelaw attacker was compiled.

She accepted the pay review body's recommendation of a bigger increase in starting salaries to attract more graduates.

The story of her bitter relationship with Gauguin is intertwined with his steady growth as an artist.

We have adjourned our investigations until we receive a transcript of the evidence taken in Sydney by AJC stewards.

With some of these nouns, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I am not worried about accusations of being 'soft'.

With some of these nouns, the preposition *of* is often followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N of n-ing.

The shares closed at 52p with rumours of a mystery buyer snapping them up.

With some of these nouns, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

The coalition has not produced details of how its election pledges will be funded.

He is one among a number of people to have died in police custody without even an explanation of what happened.

In the case of *comparison*, the preposition *of* is usually followed by a plural noun group. This pattern is N of pl-n.

Brian Wilson says that comparison of prices before and after privatisation is difficult.

account 4,5	dictionary 2	plan 1
accusation 1	directory	portrayal 3,4
admission 3	discussion 1,2	profile 3
allegations	draft 1	reading 3
announcement 1,2	endorsement 1	recommendation 1
appreciation 1,2,3,5	estimate 2,3	reports 6
assumption 1	explanation 3	rumour
assurance 1	expression 1	sense 5
autobiography	grasp 5	signing 1
awareness 1	guarantee 3	sketch 3
biography 1	history 3	story 3
charge 4	idea 2	summary 1
code 1	ignorance	survey 4
command 9	image 1	suspicion 1
comparison 1	impression 1,2	tale 2
conception 1	knowledge 1	text 3
condemnation	life 11	theory 3
confession 3	memory 2	transcript
contradiction 1	mention 2	understanding 1
criticism 1	minutes 2	values 6
critique	model 3	verdict 2
declaration 1	oath 1	version 2
defence 5	opinion 1,2	view 2
definition 1	outline 2	vision 1,2
denial 1	perception 1	vow 3
description 1	philosophy 3	withdrawal 4
detail 1,2	picture 7,9	

2 THE 'CONSTRUCTION' GROUP

The noun refers to an action or process, and the noun group after of indicates the thing that has something done to it.

The Economist recently published a lengthy and worthwhile series on constitutional matters including the **abolition** of the monarchy.

Their expansion plans could include the **acquisition** of a building society or credit union.

Approval of the amendments must be by unanimous vote.

He told Reuters news agency that he stood by his appeal for a **boycott** of next month's elections for an interim national assembly.

Fantasm 95, this year's annual **celebration** of science fiction, fantasy and horror, is running all this month.

Ewart was invited to take part in the **construction** of a tunnel, which was completed in the autumn of 1942.

Two Athens newspapers today continued their **defiance** of Greece's new anti-terrorist law by publishing the full text of the three organisations' proclamations.

'We have to emphasise as much as possible that the **denial** of education, the **denial** of basic health care, the **denial** of basic choices to girls is a human-rights issue,' she said yesterday.

Hutton was directly involved with the **design** of several stations for the Underground.

The newspaper has continued to publish normally despite the **dismissal** of its director.

A peace agreement will have no chance unless it is absolutely clear-cut, with maps laying out a **division** of territory.

An upset stomach or sunburn often interrupts the **enjoyment** of days spent relaxing on the beach or sightseeing.

Fear may increase the subjective **experience** of pain, but extreme fear can block out pain altogether.

There are demands for an **extension** of the legal status of unions in order to allow them to reverse some of their decline.

A public meeting of golf enthusiasts was held at the Brisbane City Hall to discuss the **formation** of a municipal golf club.

A Waterloo sunset is a fair **glimpse** of paradise.

A high **intake** of fat – especially animal fat – is strongly linked with heart disease.

This week sees the **launch** of the Crescent Fund, aimed at Britain's Muslim community.

They claim around 100 jobs will be created in mining and in the local **manufacture** of gold jewellery.

Immediate **payment** of the balance is required in order to avoid disconnection of supply.

We put months and months into the **preparation** of the decorations for both the wedding and the reception.

For most people, the **purchase** of a new piece of software is a simple matter.

She hoped to see Brecht and to attend the last weeks of **rehearsal** of her play.

Iran reopened its embassy in London following the **renewal** of diplomatic relations.

The yen has made a recovery, continuing the **reversal** of recent losses.

Clear **segregation** of duties is a fundamental principle of internal control in all businesses.

Britain's criminals have turned to the **theft** of tiny computer memory chips to make money.

Unnecessary **use** of sprinklers is a shocking **waste** of water.

The preposition of is often followed by a wh-clause.

Could there be a clearer **illustration** of why the public does not trust politicians than the Government's handling of BSE?

In the case of exchange, reconciliation and separation, the preposition of is often followed by a plural noun group. This pattern is N of pl-n.

There is feasting and an **exchange** of gifts and dancing round a fire.

abolition	closure 2	erosion 2,3
absorption 1,2	conclusion 3	establishment 1
abuse 3	conduct 2	exchange 1,4
acceptance 1,4	conquest 1	exclusion 1,2
accumulation 1,2	conservation 1,3	exercise 1 (of power)
achievement 2	construction 1,2,3	exhibition 2
acquisition 4	consumption 1,2	expenditure 2 (of effort)
addition 3	conversion 2	experience 5
allocation 2	defiance 1	exploitation 2
alteration 1	delivery 1,2	exposure 3
analysis 1,2,3	demonstration 4	expulsion 2
application 2,4	denial 2	extension 4
appointment 1	deployment	extraction 1
appraisal 1,2	design 4	flick 1
approval 1	development 1,2,3,4	formation 1,2
assumption 2	discovery 1,2,3,4	glimpse 1,3
betrayal	dismissal 1,2	handling 4
bite 2	display 3	hire 3
blockade 1	disposal 2	holding 2,5 (of talks)
boycott	distribution 1,2	identification 1
breakdown 4	diversion 4	illustration 1
building 3	division 1,2	imitation 2
calculation 1	election 2	importation 1
capture 1	encouragement	inclusion
care 3	enforcement	injection 2 (of money)
celebration 2	enjoyment	intake 1,2
change 1	erection 2	interpretation 2 (of a role)

invasion 1	pursuit 1,2	seizure 2,3,4
invention 2	reading 3	separation 1
investment 1,4	recall 4	setting up ◇1
launch 2,3,4	recognition 2	settlement 1,3,5
limitation 1,4	reconciliation 2	shedding 7 (of blood)
loan 2	reconstruction 3	show 9 (of affection)
loss 1,2,3,7	recovery 4 (of consciousness)	sight 2,3
maintenance 3	registration	signing 3 (of a player)
manufacture ▷1	regulation 2	snap 3 (of your fingers)
measurement 2,3	rehearsal 1	study 3
nomination 3	reinforcement 2	submission 2
oppression	relaxation 2 (of a rule)	substitution ◇1
organization 3	release 2,5,8	supervision
passage 7	removal 1	surrender ▷2 (of weapons)
payment 1,2	renewal 1	takeover 1
perfection 3	replacement 1	taste 7 (of freedom)
performance 5	reshuffle	theft
placement 1	resolution 4	timing 2
practice 3 (of medicine)	return 3	tolerance 2
preparation 1	revelation 2	tour 1,3,4
presentation 1,4	reversal 1,2	transfer 3,▷6
production 3	review 1	transmission 1
prosecution 1	revision 1	treatment 1,2
provision 1	running 2	use 1,5,6
publication 3	sale 1	waste 1
purchase 2	segregation	

3 THE 'LOVE' GROUP

The noun refers to an attitude or feeling. The noun group after of indicates the thing or person that the attitude or feeling concerns.

This is a productive use: many nouns indicating emotions can be used with this pattern.

She described her admiration of single-parent families, families of grandparents raising their grandchildren – all kinds of families.

Sixteen-year-old Hugh, who is at Bryanston, is the only one of her children who has inherited her love of sport.

The preposition of is often followed by an '-ing' clause.

Large numbers of elderly people live in fear of losing their homes because they were persuaded to take out unsuitable home income schemes, according to Age Concern.

The search was called off last night as coastguards gave up hopes of finding him alive.

admiration 2	dislike 2	hatred	horror 2
approval 3	fear 1,3,5	hope 4	love 7

4 THE 'DIAGRAM' GROUP

The noun refers to a picture or representation of some kind. The noun group after of indicates what it represents.

The policeman showed a diagram of the position of the body.

I did what I thought was a competent drawing of the nude model.

The colour illustration of Alice by Sir John Tenniel for 'Alice in Wonderland' was first published in 1911.

Every schoolroom and every office had a portrait or bust of Lenin.

bust 6	imitation 1,4	portrait	sketch 1
copy 1	map 1	portrayal 1,2,3,4	statue
diagram	model 1	prototype 2	
drawing	photograph 1	replica 1	
illustration 2	picture 1	representation 2	

5 THE 'SIGN' GROUP

The noun refers to a sign, proof, or symbol of something. The noun group after of indicates what it shows or represents. We include here *reminder* and *souvenir*, which refer to things that make you think of something.

She and her husband had moved in a house opposite. I invited them to dinner, a neighbourly gesture of goodwill.

The proof of a good song is being able to play it night after night and never getting bored with it.

The work is a fascinating reminder of the influence of Africa on the music of other countries and cultures.

Hypochondria is often a symptom of another illness such as depression and, once the problem is diagnosed, it can be treated.

The preposition of is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The six-month project shows no sign of being completed.

The preposition of is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

Your pulse is a measure of how often your heart needs to beat to get all the blood round your body.

badge 2	index 5	sign 5	token 4
demonstration 3,4	indicator 1	signal 3	trace 6
evidence 1	mark 9	souvenir	trademark 2
gesture 2	measure 4,5	stamp 7	
herald 2	proof 1	symbol 1,2	
illustration 1	reminder 1	symptom 1,2	

6 THE 'CAUSE' AND 'RESULT' GROUP

The noun refers to a cause or result. The noun group after of indicates what it causes or results from.

Bill Clinton campaigned as an agent of change.

'We're now seeing the benefits of the actions we have taken over the past two or three years,' said Evans.

Drugs are certainly the cause of much crime but a large part of this is because of their illegality.

I do like a reaction when I have spent hours in the kitchen. I want people to tell me how wonderful the fruits of my labour are.

What's the secret of your success?

With some nouns, the preposition of is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Some vets argue that injuries to leg bones and tendons are the result of pushing animals too hard and too soon.

aftermath	consequence 1	implication 1 (usu plural)	result 1
agent 4	effect 1	legacy 2	root 7
benefit 1	fruits 3	outcome	secret 3
cause 1	generator 2	product 2	source 4

7 THE 'RISE' AND 'FALL' GROUP

The noun refers to the occurrence, beginning, development, or ending of something or someone. We include here nouns referring to success and failure, and nouns such as *fortunes* and *history* which refer to events that happen to someone or something. The noun group after *of* indicates the person or thing involved.

Diplomats were inclined to treat the election as free and fair, in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

He was happily married to a girl he had known since his schooldays and their cheerful domesticity was confirmed by the arrival of a daughter, Emma.

She had watched the blossoming of love between her young sister and this man fifteen years her senior.

Six years ago the collapse of apartheid and the release from jail of Nelson Mandela seemed about as probable as the fall of the Berlin wall.

These arrests were the logical conclusion of four years of investigations.

Ministers welcomed the dawn of a more harmonious age in relations between parents and education authorities.

A fresh inquiry may be held into the disappearance of a woman whose husband was cleared of her murder.

The decline in price fueled the rapid evolution of computing from mainframes to minicomputers.

They came to the conclusion that their interests and the fortunes of the Labour Party were the same.

He said the treatment might delay the onset of full-blown Aids if started early.

It's here again – Brisbane's annual communal ritual that marks the passing of winter and the beginning of new life with the spring.

A high wall has been built around part of the embassy quarter, in an attempt to prevent a repetition of the events in July.

The rise of nationalism is also contributing to the economic breakdown.

absence 2	dawn 2	existence 1,2	passage 8 (of time)
advent 1,2	dawning 3	expansion	passing 2,3,4
appearance 3,4	death 1,3	failure 1,7	presence 5
approach >1,6	decline 3	fall 6	progress 2
arrival 2,3,4,6	decrease 2	finish 7	repeat 7
beginnings 2	demise	flowering 1	repetition 1
beginning 4	departure 2	fortunes 4	resignation 1
birth 1,2	destiny 1	growth 1	return 2
blossoming >2	development 1,2	history 1,5	revival 1
breakdown 1	disappearance 1,2,3	life 4	rise 12,20
change 1	downfall 1,2	march 5	success 3
close 10	duration 1	occurrence 2	turnover 1,2
collapse >2	emergence	onset	
conclusion 2	end 1,3	opening 2 (of play)	
continuation 1	evolution 2	origin 1	

8 THE 'FLOW' GROUP

The noun refers to movement or travel. The noun group after *of* indicates who or what is

travelling. We include here *absence* and *presence*, which refer to being somewhere or not being somewhere.

Pandy, their dog, gives early warning of the arrival of visitors.

Having established what they are good at, learning organisations need to remove internal barriers to the flow of information.

Whether this programme will halt the spread of disease is questionable.

absence 1	entry 2	influx	return 2
arrival 1	exodus	passage 5	spread >5
entrance 1,2,1,3	flow >1,2,3	presence 1	

9 THE 'SUPPORT' GROUP

The noun refers to help or support. The noun group after *of* indicates the person who helps or supports someone or something.

Unity can only be achieved by the consent of all people on the island.

Physically, he works under the guidance of a trainer and health specialist.

approval 1	backing 1	guidance
assistance 1	blessing 2	services 7
attentions 4	consent 1	support 1

10 THE 'ISSUE' GROUP

The noun indicates what something is in a general way. The noun group after *of* tells you specifically what that thing is; it identifies the first noun.

The burden of taxation still falls most heavily on ordinary families, often with children.

The whole concept of community disease prevention programmes relies on widespread diligence in having children vaccinated.

The reports conclude that there is a feeling of isolation and despair among the rising prison population of foreign nationals.

For us to be competitive internationally, we're going to have to do better in the field of education.

The first scheme shows how to create the illusion of more space, using neutral tones and natural fabrics.

The issue of clean air in restaurants will not go away and customers will vote with their feet in the end.

We had spent a childhood without exposure to the luxury of lollies, chocolates, ice-cream, or entertainment.

By 1947 he held the high post of chief of the Budget Bureau.

Haslam's scientific training was invaluable to Jones and they made a formidable combination of great value to the science of aviation.

Most of us regard the theory of evolution as a useful tool in helping to understand our world.

The preposition *of* is often followed by an '-ing' clause.

Even those who accept capital punishment in specific circumstances will find no sanction for the act of beheading in the Koran.

Coming to this school as a boarder I have had the advantage of being taught academic subjects in small groups.

Thirty years ago, London had only 39 traffic wardens, with the sole **aim** of keeping traffic flowing.

Why not adopt the Italian **custom** of serving hot pasta in wide shallow bowls rather than flat plates?

At international level Bryan Robson has the rare **distinction** of holding two records for the fastest goal.

He has acquired an endearing **habit** of listening to every question with an expression of acute concentration.

Students often make the **mistake** of deciding their future before considering all the options, careers advisers say

The school also has a strong **philosophy** of developing self-worth and building self-esteem.

With some nouns, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **N of n-ing**.

I can't help feeling vaguely disquieted at the **prospect** of my daughters playing rugby.

The preposition *of* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

Some felt she was telling the Tory right that the Government should stay neutral on this issue, allowing women the **choice** of whether to go to work or not.

They must resolve the **question** of who is really in charge.

act 9	dream 3	pleasure 3
activity 3	ethic 4	ploy
advantage 3	facade 2	post 2,1
aim 2	faculty 1	power 2 (of speech)
air 5 (of amusement)	feeling 1,6,10,12	practice 1
area 6	fever 2 (of excitement)	problem 1
art 6	field 5	process 1
atmosphere 3	framework 1 (of regulations)	prospect 2
aura	frenzy (of nationalism)	question 5
benefit 4	gift 1,2	rank 1
burden 1	habit 1,2	realm 1
business 6	hazard 1	role 1,2
cargo	honour 4	science 2,3
chant 1	idea 1,4,7	security 2
choice 2	ideal 1	sensation 1
chorus 6	illusion 1,2	sense 3,4
climate 2	impression 2	sphere 2
concept	institution 3	state 7 (of depression)
cry 4	intention 1	task 1
cult 4	issue 1	theme 1
culture 3	job 2,4	theory 1 (of evolution)
current 4	label 4	thought 2,6
custom 1	luxury 4	threat 1
defect 1	menace 1	thrill 1
diet 2	merit 1	tide 3 (of opinion)
disadvantage 1	mistake 1	tide 5 (of history)
disease 2	note 7,8 (of nostalgia)	veil 2 (of silence)
distinction 4	notion	wall 5
doctrine 1	option 2	winds 2 (of change)
domain 1	path 4	word 5 (of warning)
donation	philosophy 3	world 6

11 THE 'MAGNITUDE' GROUP

The noun refers to something that can be expressed as an amount or figure. The noun

group after *of* specifies the amount or figure. This pattern is **N of amount**.

This is a productive use: any noun referring to something that can be measured or timed can be used with this pattern.

The organisers in Barcelona have set a **ceiling** of 15,000 competitors and officials.

The watch featured here is waterproof to a **depth** of 100 metres.

The European Commission foresees **growth** of 1.6 per cent, up from an original **estimate** of 1 per cent.

The performance will start at 6pm, and at 7pm there will be an **interval** of one hour.

The most powerful earthquakes, at a **magnitude** of nearly 8.8, occurred in Chile in 1906 and in Japan in 1933.

The company should be able to maintain last year's dividend **payment** of 4.5p a share.

It is believed the sale reflected a **yield** of around 18 per cent.

age 1	estimate 2	investment 2	shortfall
allowance 1,3	expenditure 1	IQ	slope 5
altitude	extension 2	length 1	span 5
ceiling 2	gain 2,3	magnitude 2	sum 1
contribution 2	gap 2	majority 2	time 17
cost 1,7	gift 1	payment 1	walk 3
depth 1,2	growth 2	period 1	weight 1
distance 1	height 1	range 3	yield 9
donation	increase 2	rate 2	
drop 17	interval 1	saving 1	

12 THE 'TOWN' GROUP

The noun refers to a place in a general way. The noun group after *of* indicates the name of the place concerned.

The seaside town of **Dunbar** is on the east coast railway line about 25 minutes from Edinburgh.

borough	county	kingdom 1
city	district 2	town 1

13 THE 'LOOK' GROUP

The noun refers to the way someone looks or what they say. The noun group after *of* indicates the feeling the person has or is expressing. This is a productive use: all nouns which refer to facial expressions and noises uttered by people can be used with this pattern.

With a sharp **cry** of horror, she drew back violently against the bedstead.

A **look** of surprise flickered across his face.

cry 3,5	look 1,4
expression 2	mask 3

14 THE 'ERA' GROUP

The noun refers to a period of time or a point in time. The noun group after *of* indicates what happens during that time.

The 1960s was an **era** of steep economic decline and Wilson's leadership seemed to stumble from crisis to crisis.

I am preparing a rota and the beach will be watched throughout the **hours** of darkness by two observers.

The meeting comes at a **time** of crisis in the current round of international trade negotiations.

age 5	hour 4,5	life 4	term 6,7
era	hours 6	lifetime 1	time 8

15 THE 'PIECE' GROUP

The noun indicates a quantity of a substance or thing, or the form that it takes. The noun group after *of* contains an uncount noun indicating the substance or thing concerned.

Nouns with this meaning can be divided into four groups, according to the type of substance or thing:

(i) solids and liquids

Combine beans, onion and mayonnaise and place on a **bed** of lettuce.

The pillow felt like a **block** of ice and it hurt to breathe.

He enjoyed wine and appreciated a **drop** of good malt whisky.

They use a **jet** of water under very high pressure to cut solid objects.

Serve new potatoes steaming hot with a **lump** of butter.

I just went to the tea rooms, had a cup of tea and a **piece** of cake.

We were standing on the edge of a **pool** of water the size and shape of a grave.

He wrote the licence number of the car on a **scrap** of paper.

He scratched his face, leaving a **trail** of mud across his cheek.

amount 1	drink 3	patch 2	shock 10 (of hair)
arrangement 3	drop 14	piece 1	shot 7 (of a drug)
bead 2 (of water)	fillet 1,2	pile 1,2	side 12 (of beef)
bed 3,7	film 6	pinch 2	slab
belt 3 (of land)	finger 3 (of land)	plank 1 (of wood)	slice 1
bit 7	fix 20 (of a drug)	plot 5 (of land)	spot 3
blanket 2 (of snow)	fountain 2	pool 3,4	stock 6
block 3	handful 2	portion 2	store 4,6
body 8 (of water)	heap 1	pyramid 2	stretch 2 (of road)
bolt 8 (of cloth)	jet 3	quota 1,2,3	strip 1,2
bundle 4	layer 1	reel 1 (of film)	supply 3
carpet 3 (of moss)	leg 3 (of lamb)	rib 2 (of beef)	sweep 13 (of land)
change 6 (of clothing)	length 4,8	ring 2,3	thread 3
chunk 1,2	lock 6 (of hair)	roll 7 (of paper)	tract 1 (of land)
circle 2 (of pastry)	loop 1	round 6 (of bread)	trail 3
coat 4 (of paint)	lump 1	saddle 4 (of lamb)	vein 4 (of a metal)
collection 1,2	mass 2	scrap 1	volume 1
crop 2	mat 3	seam 2 (of coal)	wall 5
cut 16 (of meat)	mount	shake 14 (of vinegar)	
deposit 5 (of a metal)	packet 1	sheet 4,5,6	
dose 1	parcel 2 (of land)	shipment 1	

(ii) air, gas, and fire

They saw a big flash and a huge **ball** of fire reaching hundreds of feet into the sky.

Police confirmed reports that there had been a **bank** of fog but said that it had cleared before the crash.

The country has been plunged into sub-zero temperatures by a **blast** of air from the wastes of Antarctica.

There was an appalling **cloud** of smoke which smelt like poisonous gas.

ball 2	cloud 2	curtain 4	sheet 6
bank 3	column 2	jet 3	stream 3
blast 6	current 2	pocket 4	tongue 6

(iii) light and colour

Suddenly the darkness was lit up by a **beam** of light from a torch.

Amy had brought a big bowl of oranges that made a **splash** of colour in the dimming firelight.

band 5	blaze 3	splash 5
beam 2,4	shaft 4	

(iv) abstract things

A bomb exploded under a BBC outside-broadcast van and five women were arrested amidst a **blaze** of publicity.

According to Vogue, the so-called Sixties revival is not 'just a **dose** of nostalgia'.

Please help us give a **ray** of hope to troubled boys and their families by sending a special holiday gift today.

abundance	dose 2	space 6 (of time)
amount 1	episode 2 (of a programme)	spark 5 (of excitement)
arsenal 3	excess 1	spread 9 (of ability)
barrage 2 (of criticism)	feast 4	strain 10 (of bitterness)
bit 8	fund 4 (of energy)	streak 3 (of madness)
blanket 3 (of depression)	layer 2	stretch 4 (of time)
blaze 5 (of publicity)	minimum 2	stroke 8 (of luck)
body 9 (of information)	piece 4	stroke 9 (of genius)
breath 4 (of common sense)	ray 2 (of hope)	wealth 2
concentration 2	reservoir 2 (of energy)	
degree 1	scrap 1	

16 THE 'GANG' GROUP

The noun indicates a group or quantity of people or things. The noun group after *of* contains a plural form or plural noun which indicates the people or things involved. This pattern is N of pl-n.

There is a growing **army** of parents who feel angry at being deceived by the Government.

I was one of a small **band** of journalists encamped in an abandoned girls' school.

She took a cigarette from her bag and lit it from a **book** of matches.

Retailer Joyce Ma has already established a designer fashion **chain** of shops.

Ted was immensely popular among a wide **circle** of friends and admirers.

His first **collection** of poems, *The Old Pianist*, was published in 1945.

Spanish biologists have discovered a **colony** of 350 seals, doubling the known world population.

I was passed by a **crocodile** of eight-year-old boys in uniform from a private school.

The festival offers a **feast** of performances, recitals, exhibitions, workshops, literary events, book and magazine launches.

A **gang** of about 100 youths stoned police at Castle Gate.

You can't buy milk in the village, even though there's a **herd** of cows here.

If I were asked to compose a list of the 12 greatest films ever, Alpine Fire would be on that list.

The entire width of the street was one mass of people.

Somewhere at home, most of us possess a pack of cards or a backgammon or chess-set.

In my local store, queues of people are always waiting to buy lottery tickets.

My meals are made up of robust food, good enough to satisfy a regiment of hungry customers.

The coach was sacked on Wednesday following a run of dismal performances.

After a spate of 'road rage' incidents involving violence between motorists, psychologists warned people to stay cool.

We'd had a succession of mild winters and hot summers.

He was attended on both sides by his troop of pretty daughters.

Portoferraio is a fascinating warren of narrow streets, alleys and winding steps.

abundance	crew 4	mass 1,8,10	school 7 (of fish)
amount 1	crocodile 2	maze 2 (of streets)	scrum 2 (of people)
army 2	crop 2,3	maze 3 (of ideas)	sea 4 (of people)
arrangement 3	crowd 1	mound	selection 2,3
array 1,2,3	den 4 (of thieves)	nest 5 (of spies)	sequence 1
arsenal 1	display 5	network 2	series 1
band 3	ensemble 3	number 2,3	set 1,1
batch	excess 1	ocean 3	shipment 1
battalion 2	feast 4	pack 4,6,7,8	shower 7 (of sparks)
battery 4	federation 2	packet 1	spectrum 2
belt 3 (of trees)	fleet 2	pair 1,2	spray 1 (of water)
block 1 (of flats)	flock 2	parade 11	spray 9 (of flowers)
block 8 (of seats)	flood 4 (of people)	party 4	spread 9 (of abilities)
body 5	forest 2	pile 1,2	squad 3
book 2	galaxy 3	pool 4	stock 6
bunch 1,2,3,4	gang 1,2,4	portion 2	store 4,6
bundle 4	group 1	pride 5	stream 2,3,4
carpet 3 (of leaves)	grouping	pyramid 2	string 2,3,4
catalogue 3	grove 1 (of trees)	quartet 3	succession 1
chain 5,6,7	handful 1	queue 1	supply 3
change 6 (of clothes)	haul 3 (of drugs)	quota 1,2,3	team 2
circle 3,8	heap 1	raft 3	tier 1
cluster 1	herd 1	rain 5 (of stones)	tribe 2
clutch 5	knot 3 (of people)	rainbow 2 (of colours)	troop 4
collection 1,2,3	layer 1	range 1,8	variety 2
colony 2,4	legion 2	rank 8	volume 1
column 3	line 3	regiment 2	warren 2
complex 3,4	list 1,2	repertoire 2	wave 11 (of immigrants)
concentration 2	litter 2	round 8 (of drinks)	wealth 2
contingent 1,2	load 4	row 1	web 2 (of lies)
course 6 (of antibiotics)	lot 4	school 6 (of writers)	

17 THE 'BOX' GROUP

The noun indicates a container. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing or things contained in it. This pattern can be used to refer to a container and its contents, as in *She fetched a glass of water from the bathroom*, or just to the contents, as in *She went to the kitchen and gulped down a glass of water*.

Belle fetched a basin of hot water from the black kettle on the kitchen range.

It was St Valentine's Day and Joel gave me a box of chocolates.

Would you like a cup of tea?

Breakfast was a kettle of lukewarm water, a jar of Nescafe and a basket of yesterday's croissants.

Place a teaspoon of demerara sugar on top of the lemon.

At the village shop she bought oranges, toothpaste and a tin of salmon.

The suffix *-ful* can be added to some of these nouns when you are referring to the contents of the container.

They both ate a large bowful of cereal this morning.

Martin climbed up beside him and accepted a mugful of hot, bitter coffee.

bag 1,2	bucket 1	glass 2	tablespoon 2
barrel 1	butt 4	jar 1,2	tank 1
basin 1	can 2,1	kettle 1	teaspoon 2
basket 1,2	container 2	mug 1	tin 3
bath 6	cup 1	plate 1	tub 1
bottle 1,3	cylinder 2	pot 1,2,3	
bowl 2	dish 2	sack 1	
box 1	drum 2	spoon 2	

18 THE 'KILOMETRE' GROUP

The noun is a count noun indicating a unit of measurement. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing that is measured.

The summer sun has thawed the top 30 centimetres of a soil that is frozen to a depth of hundreds of metres.

Bowen has kilometres of white sandy beaches on its doorstep.

I drink a litre of pure water every day.

acre	kilo	mile 1	tonne
centimetre	kilogram	ounce 1,2	yard 1
foot 4	kilometre	pint 1	
gallon	litre	pound 3	
inch 1	metre 1	ton 1	

19 THE 'FRACTION' GROUP

The noun indicates a very small amount of something. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing that is measured.

The flash and crackle lasted a fraction of a second.

There was just the suggestion of a twinkle in the piercing eyes.

dash 3,4	fragment 1	suggestion 4
fraction 1	hint 4	trace 5

20 THE 'PERCENTAGE' GROUP

The noun indicates a portion of a larger thing or group. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing or group concerned.

Opinion polls showed the majority of people were opposed to the agreement.

The percentage of girls in engineering has increased substantially in the past few years.

A portion of the royalties will be donated to the Salvation Army.

In the case of ratio and proportion the noun group after *of* is often followed by a

prepositional phrase introduced by to.

The **ratio** of public spending to national income has fallen by more than 7 percentage points.

bit 6	majority 1	portion 1
bulk 3	minority 1	proportion 3
concentration 3	percentage	ratio

21 THE 'ARTICLE' GROUP

The noun is a count noun indicating an individual item. The noun group after *of* contains an uncount noun indicating the type of thing concerned. We include here *copy*, where *of* is followed by a count noun indicating a book or newspaper.

Detectives have taken away **articles** of clothing, bedding and other household items for forensic examination.

Peel one **clove** of garlic, crush it, and add to a little warm water and honey.

I'm sending you over a **copy** of the new Blair biography.

He went out to get a **loaf** of bread for the family.

Her house is full of sombre, dark **pieces** of furniture.

If you do not have an order form, simply set your order out clearly on a **sheet** of paper.

act 9 (of sabotage)	bolt 7 (of lightning)	item 1	round 9 (of ammunition)
article 2 (of clothing)	cake 3 (of soap)	loaf 1 (of bread)	sheet 2 (of paper)
bar 6 (of soap)	clove 2 (of garlic)	lump 3 (of sugar)	sheet 4 (of glass)
bit 8 (of furniture)	copy 5	particle 1	stick 1.5 (of celery)
blade 4 (of grass)	grain 1	piece 4	strand 1 (of hair)

22 THE 'SAMPLE' GROUP

The noun refers to an instance or sample of something. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing or type of thing involved.

If anyone becomes ill after eating a mushroom, they should be rushed to hospital, with a **sample** of the mushroom if possible.

The preposition *of* is often followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N of n -ing.

Very funny, very well acted – brilliantly directed – a first class **instance** of a mainstream Hollywood film tackling serious issues.

example 1,2	masterpiece 2	sample 1,2,3
instance 2	model 2,5	specimen 2,4

23 THE 'EPISODE' GROUP

The noun refers to an event or occurrence of something, often sudden or extreme. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing involved.

He described his symptoms as like a sudden **attack** of low blood pressure.

A typical **episode** of severe depression, if untreated, lasts upwards of a year.

I still have the photo, and neither of us can look at it without bursting into **gales** of laughter.

As the **spell** of hot weather continues to break records, there are warnings across Britain of the dangers of countryside fires.

The authorities anticipate a **wave** of terrorism by the radicals.

attack 6	fit 2,3	outbreak	run 37 (of luck)
bout 1,2	flash 1,3	outburst 1,3	spate 1
case 1	flurry 1,2	rash 3	spell 4
epidemic 1,2	gale 2	roar 3 (of laughter)	surge 4,6
episode 3	instance 2	round 2.1 (of talks)	volley 2 (of gunfire)
fall 3 (of snow)	occurrence 1	round 2.10 (of applause)	wave 9,10

24 THE 'RIM' GROUP

The noun indicates a part of something. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing concerned. We include here nouns such as *remains* and *ruins* which refer to the parts of something that remain when it has been damaged.

A man was critically wounded in a gun fight in the Easton **area** of Bristol.

'What do you want?' he shouted, swinging the **barrel** of the gun towards her.

Trim the **base** of the lettuces and remove the outer leaves.

Our ancestors came from islands off the **coast** of southern Africa.

The Akamas Peninsula in the south-west **corner** of Cyprus is the island's most beautiful area.

The family moved to Apeldoorn in the **east** of Holland.

He was 24 and leading the first assault on the west **face** of a Himalayan mountain called Amadablam.

They keep the television at the **foot** of the bed, and receive friends there when they call for tea.

Members of the police union marched at the **head** of the demonstration.

In the **middle** of the room was a large four-poster bed.

The DNA molecule, within the **nucleus** of each cell, contains the master plans for all future reproduction.

In the box was the cutest little kitten, which could fit into the **palm** of my hand.

Two other bedrooms are located at the **rear** of the house on the lower level and have access to the third bathroom.

Archaeologists emphasise the unique role peatlands play in preserving **remains** of ancient animals.

Nick drank gratefully, looking at her over the **rim** of the mug.

The village is built around the **ruins** of a medieval fortress.

Long-distance walker Ewart Grogan, passing through the Virungas, encountered the **skeleton** of an enormous ape.

We sat down to rest on the **stump** of an old tree trunk.

The **surface** of the sea is of course not flat, but curves with the Earth's curvature.

Our branch of the family occupied the east **wing** of the house, which had once been the servants' quarters.

area 1,4	boundary 1	continuation 2	fabric 3 (of a building)
arm 2,3,4,5	bowl 4 (of a pipe)	core 3	face 1.3 (of a mountain)
article 4 (of a document)	branch 1	corner 1,2,3,4	feature 1
back 2,4	bridge 7 (of your nose)	corners 6	finale 1
ball 4 (of your foot)	brow 3 (of a hill)	crown 5 (of your head)	finger 2 (of a glove)
barrel 3 (of a gun)	butt 2 (of a gun)	east 2	flank 3 (of a mountain)
base 1,2,3,4	butt 3 (of a cigarette)	edge 1,2	flat 7 (of your hand)
bed 5 (of a river)	ceiling 1	ends 8	floor 3 (of the ocean)
bit 6,7	chorus 5	end 9	foot 2 (of a page)
body 7	coast 1	ending 2	foot 3 (of a bed)
bottom 1,2,4,6	constituent 2	eye 9 (of a storm)	fringe 3 (of a city)

front 1,2	north 2	roof 3 (of your mouth)	south 2
ghost 1	nucleus 1	ruins 5	stump 1
grounds 7 (of a building)	outside 1	seat 5 (of your jeans)	suburb 1
head 3,6,7	outskirts	section 1	surface 1
heart 7	pad 6 (of a paw)	sector 2,3	tail 2
heel 5 (of your hand)	palm 2	segment 2,3	tip 1
interior 1,3	part 1	share 9	top 1,4
leg 4	point 8 (of a pin)	shell 6	trunk 1 (of a tree)
lip 2 (of a container)	rear 1,2	shore 1	wall 3
margin 4	region 3	side 2,7	west 2
middle 1	remains 5,6	skeleton 3	wing 3 (of a building)
mouth 3,4	remnant 1	slope 1 (of a hill)	wreckage 1
neck 3	rim 1,2	sole 3 (of your foot)	

25 THE 'STAGE' GROUP

The noun refers to an aspect or part of something abstract. Note that many of these nouns also have a concrete meaning, and therefore appear in the lists for the previous group.

Every aspect of his life remains clouded with mystery.

Those first airmail notes from India formed the basis of her first 1978 BBC television series. Overall, this is an excellent and timely book which makes a major contribution to this branch of science.

'Most of those accused of crime are from the lower end of the social spectrum,' he said.

It is young men who die, young men in the flower of their years.

Reform of state pensions is at the heart of Italy's attempts to cut its enormous public sector debt.

The family is the nucleus of the Islamic society and marriage is the only way to bring about such an institution.

He became Chancellor. It was the peak of his political life.

Obedience by women towards men is a remnant of religious teaching.

This is currently the fastest-growing segment of the personal computer industry.

We want to sign you now for more money and a longer contract than you would normally get at this stage of your career.

If I remain a lecturer here, I soon will reach the top of my salary scale.

ABC 1	core 4	heart 5	remnant 1
area 6	edge 4,7	highlight 2	seeds 3 (of doubt)
arm 6	element 1,2	ingredient 2	segment 1
aspect 1	end 12	jaws 3	stage 1
basics 1	eve	leg 5 (of a journey)	staple 2
basis 3	fabric 2	mainstream	subsidiary 1
bottom 7	flower 6	middle 4	substance 3
boundaries 2	forefront 1,2	movement 6 (of a symphony)	top 7
branch 2,3,4,5	frontiers 3	nucleus 2	turn 23 (of the century)
brink	germ 2 (of an idea)	part 8	wing 4
climax 1	guts 7 (of a subject)	peak 1	wreckage 2

26 THE 'EXTREMES' GROUP

The noun indicates an extreme state or situation. The noun group after *of* indicates the feeling or quality that is extreme.

Shelley does seem to be subject to extremes of elation and depths of despair.

The work of his musical heroes, Beethoven, Gluck and Spontini, transported him to extravagant heights of ecstasy.

depths 11,12	heat 6,7
extremes 4	heights 7

27 THE 'ARCHITECT' GROUP

In the lists below, the first noun refers to a person.

(i) These nouns refer to people who have created or founded something. The noun group after *of* indicates what the person created.

The Mayor was the architect of these by-laws in 1985 when he was on the town planning committee.

Jeff Moss is the creator of Cookie Monster and the author of that classic immortal tune, 'Rubber Ducky'.

Barrett, the 'father of Australian film', will discuss his autobiography, written with Peter Corris.

architect 2,3	creator 1	founder 1	writer 2
author 3	developer 2	maker 1,2	
breeder	father 3	pioneer 1	

(ii) These nouns indicate people who do something to or with something. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing involved.

He is an avid collector of antique shoes from around the world.

The Department has a growing section which teaches English to speakers of other languages.

Alcott was a tremendous student of human psychology as well as being an advocate of women's rights.

Mr Herbert was a heavy user of drugs, including heroin.

biographer	holder 1	prophet 2	student 3
collector 1	host 6	recipient	supplier
critic 2	interpreter 2	scorer 1	user
distributor 1	judge 6	seller 1	
exporter	owner	speaker 2	

(iii) These nouns refer to people who support, admire, protect, or oppose someone or something. The noun group after *of* indicates who or what they support, admire, protect, or oppose.

Joe Ricci is a fervent advocate of the new system.

He is a vigorous opponent of nuclear tests and boarded the Rainbow Warrior on the night before it was due to set sail for Mururoa.

He was a promoter of modern art and an influential mediator between East and West.

I have been a strong supporter of rugby league for many years.

advocate 2	disciple	lover 2	promoter 2
ally 1,3	fan 1	opponent 3	pupil 2
champion 2	follower	pal	supporter
defender 1	guardian 1,2	patron 1,2	

(iv) These nouns refer to people who are in charge of a place or organization. The noun group after *of* indicates the place or organization concerned. We include here

treasurer, which refers to someone in charge of an organization's finances.

For six years, I was **chair of Leeds city council's equal opportunities committee**.

The **chief of police** was shot and nearly killed outside his house by a gunman who escaped on a bicycle.

Simeon II, the former **king of Bulgaria**, is about to stand as a candidate in this year's presidential elections.

He has been around for a long time – seven years as **leader of the Opposition**.

captain 2,3	head 9	mayor	superintendent 2
chair 2,3	king 1	minister 1	treasurer
chairman 1	leader 1	president 2	
chief 1	lord 1	ruler 1	
controller	master 10	sheriff 3	

(v) These nouns refer to people who are very important or skilled in a particular field or activity. The noun group after *of* indicates the field or activity involved.

David Ogilvy, one of the **giants of international advertising**, points to the role of the unconscious in creativity.

'Joanna Trollope,' wrote one reviewer, 'is the **mistress of the cliché**.'

giant 5	heroine 2	lord 7	mistress 6
hero 2	king 2	master 3,4	queen 3

(vi) These nouns refer to people who live in or come from a particular place. The noun group after *of* indicates the place.

My daughter was born in this country and is a **citizen of the United States**.

citizen 2	resident 1
native 2	son 2

(vii) These nouns refer to people but do not fit into any of the above six groups.

She had forged her will, making herself the main **beneficiary of her aunt's estate**.

Her first leading role, back in her days of rep, was Sophia Western, the sweet, pretty **heroine of Tom Jones**.

'I have always liked to give orders since I was about 11 and I suppose I am a **prisoner of my own nature**,' he said.

At the tender age of 29 he was already a **veteran of the Gulf War**.

ancestor 1,2	darling 5	heroine 1	survivor 1,2
beneficiary 1	descendant 1,2	member 1,2	tool 3
creature 3	hero 1	prisoner 3	veteran 1,2

28 THE 'FRAGRANCE' GROUP

The noun indicates a quality, characteristic, or feature. The noun group after *of* indicates the person or thing that has the quality, characteristic, or feature.

Peter turned up early one morning to show us the **beauties of the coral reef**.

The media often fails to portray the **complexity of the health-care system**.

The **condition of his colleague** was described as 'serious but stable'.

The **density of the population** meant that there was more misery and starvation to the square foot than perhaps anywhere else on earth.

One **disadvantage of Phuket** is that it is a very long way east of Britain, so you are likely to suffer jet lag.

The report released yesterday said the **diversity of language in Australia** was a national resource which had the potential for huge economic gain.

The sweet, spicy, warming **fragrance of cardamom** has been enjoyed since the days of the ancient Egyptians, who used it as perfume and incense.

I cannot stress enough the **gravity of the situation** with a whole range of firms unable to survive for many more days.

He admitted that the authorities had no indication of the **identity of the bombers**.

An examination of the stories tells us something about the **importance of Christianity** in the modern world.

Her belief in the absolute **rightness of everything she does** is unshakeable.

We are not going to be able to overcome the present **shortcomings of the system**.

Matisse is highly regarded for the **simplicity of his drawings and designs**.

Mexican floor tiles and limed oak beams enhance the **size and natural lightness of the room**.

Something I have adored ever since I was a boy is the **taste of raw spring onions**.

The preposition *of* is often followed by an '-ing' clause.

The **cost of travelling one stop on the tube** will go up from 70p to 80p.

The conference is also scheduled to hear the **merits of raising the drinking age from 18 to 21**.

accuracy 1	dimensions 2,3	life 13	significance
acidity 2	disadvantage 1	lightness ◇1,6,◇2,1	silence 2
advantage 3	diversity 1,2	limits 4	simplicity 1,2
appeal 7	drift 10	location 2	size 1,2
appearance 2	dynamics 5	logic 2	smell 1
aroma	essence 1	look 2,2	soul 2
attribute 4	extent 1,2	magic 5	sound 10
beauties 4	fascination 1	magnitude 1	speed 1,2,4
beauty 6	feel ▷3	merit 1	spirit 9
behaviour 3	folly 1	merits 2	standard 1
biology 2	force 9	morality 3	stature 1,2
call 14	fragrance 1	nature 2,3	structure 1
character 1	geography 2	novelty 1	taste 2
characteristic 1	glory 3	pace 1	tenor 3
chemistry 2	glories 4	pattern 1	texture 1
coldness 1,2,7	gravity 3	perfume 3	tone 1
colour 1	heat 4	perils 1,2	trials 4
complexity	height 1	pleasures 3	truth 2
composition 1	humanity 2	psychology 2	utility 1
condition 1,4	identity 1,2	quality 1	validity
consistency 2	image 2	reality 2	value 1
cost 1	import 4	rightness 8	ways 5
danger 2	importance 1	safety 3	width 1,2
decoration 1	integrity 2	scale 1	wisdom 3
defect 1	irony 2	scent 1,4	wonders 5
delights 3	joys 2	scope 2	workings 15
demands 5	layout	shape 1,4	
density 1,2	length 1,2,3,5	shortcoming	
depth 3,4,5,10	level 1	sights 6	

29 THE 'MOOD' GROUP

The noun refers to an attitude or feeling. The noun group after *of* indicates who has the attitude or feeling.

He already occupies a position in the affections of Rangers fans where he can do no wrong.
As our opinion poll shows today, the Prime Minister has seriously misjudged the mood of the country.

affections 2	mood 3	pulse 4
attention 1,5	motivation	will 2

30 THE 'AIM' GROUP

The noun refers to an aim or function. The noun group after *of* indicates the thing or person that has that aim or function.

The aim of this book is to steer you through the maze of alternative therapies, so you can decide for yourself what is best for you.

The object of the exercise is to raise money for the charity, Intermediate Technology.

aim 2	job 3	objective 1	role 1
function 1	object 2	purpose 1,2	use 3

31 THE 'SITE' GROUP

The noun refers to a place. The noun group after *of* indicates what occurred in this place.

It will destroy part of the site of the Battle of Newbury.

field 6	scene 4	theatre 6 (of war)
location 1	site 2	

32 THE 'THUNDER' GROUP

The noun refers to a noise, and the noun group after *of* indicates the thing or person that makes the noise. This is a productive use: all nouns which refer to noises can be used with this pattern.

I heard the growing sound of rhythmic beating of drums.

A moment later he was lost to sight and the thunder of his engine was a distant sound.

beating 3,4	buzz 5	thunder 3
blare	echo 1	
blast 7	sound 1	

33 THE 'POSSIBILITY' GROUP

The noun indicates a degree of likelihood that something will happen. The noun group after *of* indicates what may happen.

Labour would aim to give all three and four-year-olds the chance of a nursery school place.

Wool carpets may increase the risk of asthma in children, research into house dust mites has found.

The threat of a trade war between America and China receded, after an agreement to freeze imports of Chinese textiles for three years.

The preposition *of* is often followed by an '-ing' clause.

The Republican leader has not ruled out the possibility of running for president next year.

The preposition *of* is often followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N of n -ing.

There is no prospect of this situation improving.

chance 1	hope 4	possibility 1	risk 1
danger 3	likelihood 1	prospect 1	threat 1

34 THE 'SHORTAGE' GROUP

The noun refers to a shortage or lack of something. The noun group after *of* indicates the type of thing concerned.

Schools are suffering an acute shortage of staff.

lack 1	scarcity
poverty 2	shortage

35 THE 'TYPE' GROUP

The noun refers to a type or form of something. The noun group after *of* indicates the type of thing concerned.

He is a well-known figure in France, one of a new breed of academics who are also regular performers on television.

The kind of tourists attracted there are the kind of people who're drawn to an unspoiled landscape.

The type of books chosen for serialisation varies enormously.

The film is an elaborate version of the legend of King Arthur.

brand 2	generation 1,3	manifestation	type 1,1,1,2
breed 6	grade 2	mode 1	variety 3
class 6	kind 1	shades 6	version 1
family 6	line 21,24	sort 1,2	
form 1	make 8	tone 2	

36 THE 'MIXTURE' GROUP

The noun refers to a mixture or union of some kind. The noun group after *of* indicates the ingredients or elements involved. We include here *clash* and *collision*, which refer to situations in which different things do not combine well together. These nouns are usually followed by a plural noun group. This pattern is N of pl-n.

Pinter's work is a blend of comedy and menace.

The problem, often, is a clash of styles.

The majority of British club sides consist of a mixture of professionals, students and amateurs.

blend 2	cocktail 2	fusion 1,2	union 3
clash 2	collision 2	mix 4	
coalition 2	combination	mixture 1,2	

37 THE 'WAY' GROUP

The noun refers to a way of doing something or a thing that enables someone to do

something. The noun group after *of* indicates what is being done or attempted.

The fax is fast coming to rival the telephone as a **means of communication**.

The preposition *of* is often followed by an '-ing' clause.

That's one **way of dealing with the problem**.

means 1 method way 1,2,7

38 THE 'GIANT' GROUP

The noun describes someone or something. The noun group after *of* indicates what kind of person or thing is being described. It usually begins with *a*.

This use is productive: a wide range of descriptive nouns can be used in this way.

He was a **giant of a man**, with a deep voice that instantly commanded respect.

That yacht of his is a **jewel of a boat**.

gem 2 humdinger masterpiece 3 pig 3
giant 4 jewel 2 peach 3 slip 10 (of a girl)

39 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are many other nouns which have this pattern.

It was the 10th **anniversary of her mother's death**, and the season reminded her that she was an orphan.

Memphis brags loudly that it's the barbecue **capital of the world**.

The Sunday lunch menu offered a **choice of three dishes for each course**.

He did not disclose the **contents of the letter**, which he said was marked 'private and confidential'.

When vigilance relaxes, the **cycle of violence** and bloodshed will resume.

All plants are clearly labelled, and displayed in alphabetical order for **ease of reference**.

Political correctness is the **enemy of creativity**.

The film won seven Cesars, the French **equivalent of the Academy Awards**, and a Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival.

He should not have to suffer severe financial loss through no **fault of his own**.

The letters appear to direct the **finger of blame** for Barings' collapse even more firmly at directors in the bank's London office.

The **hand of the military authorities** can be seen in the entire electoral process.

Without mathematics, pupils are not able to speak the **language of science**.

Spinoza held that miracles, if defined as events that break the **laws of nature**, do not occur.

The riverbus is an efficient **system of catamarans** linking Chelsea Harbour in the west with Charing Cross, the City, Docklands and Greenwich.

The White House has been the **target of four attacks** in the past year.

anniversary choice 1 contents 1
avenue 3 (of investigation) circumstances 1,2 context 1
beating ◇3 clarity 2 (of vision) control 1,2,▷6
blur 1 clutches 2 convenience 1
capital 4,5 concern 3,10 cube 3
centre 6 (of attention) concerns 5 cuisine 1
channel 2 (of communication) content 2,4 custody 1

cycle 4 lifetime 2 reflection 3
domain 2 machinery 2 reign 2,3
dominance matter 3 (of interpretation) reins 2 (of power)
dynamic 4 memory 4 relation 2
ease 2 ministry 1 replica 2
echo 5 native 5 rule 2,3
enemy 4 object 3 rules 1
envy 3 opposite 4 safety 4
equivalent 1,2,3 orbit 3 sense 6
ethics 2 order 3,1 speciality 2
fault 1 organ 3 square 7
favourite 1,2 outline 4 stronghold 1,2
finger 13 (of blame) ownership subject 2 (of criticism)
focus 2 path 3 sum 1,3,4
form 2 pick 2 system 1,3,4
friendship 3 pillar 3 (of society) tally 1
grasp 3 plight target 3
hand 2 predecessor 2 test 6
history 4 presidency things 15
home 8 prey 1 threshold 2
indictment 1 principles 3 toast 5
land 5 proofs 2 view 5
language 3 property 1 wastes 7
lapse 2 prototype 1 wheel 8 (of fortune)
law 6 (of nature) province 3 wheels 9 (of government)
law 7 (of gravity) ranks 6 (of the media) world 7
laws 4 rate 4

Other related patterns

N of amount

See meaning group 11 above.

N of pl-n

See meaning groups 1, 2, 16, and 36 above.

37 Non n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *on* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause.

Some nouns are sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*. *Upon* is a more formal or literary word.

	Noun	on	noun group/-ing clause/wh-clause
useful	advice	on	how to run a business
the	focus	on	protecting the child
his	influence	on	men's fashion
my	thoughts	on	life in general

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'TALK' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ARTICLE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CONFERENCE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'IDEAS' GROUP
- 5 THE 'EXPERT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'COMMISSION' GROUP
- 7 THE 'EMPHASIS' GROUP
- 8 THE 'ATTACK' GROUP
- 9 THE 'LAW' GROUP
- 10 THE 'BAN' GROUP
- 11 THE 'BURDEN' GROUP
- 12 THE 'WORK' GROUP
- 13 THE 'BLOW' GROUP
- 14 THE 'EFFECT' GROUP
- 15 THE 'DEPENDENCE' GROUP
- 16 THE 'TAX' GROUP
- 17 THE 'PROFIT' GROUP
- 18 THE 'BET' GROUP
- 19 THE 'IMPROVEMENT' GROUP
- 20 THE 'STAIN' GROUP
- 21 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'TALK' GROUP

These nouns refer to speech or information.

An **announcement** on a replacement for Mr O'Connell is not expected before the end of the year.

I would welcome any **comments** on the book, which should be sent to me care of the publisher.

Vic Rampling gave an informative **talk** on the food value of wild plants.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause.

However, the UN Security Council's first **discussions** on enforcing these sanctions are to start tomorrow.

Please turn to page 198 for more **information** on how to enter and the competition rules.

Low-down is always preceded by the determiner *the*.

Now we want you to give us **the low-down** on your team-mates.

advice	discussion	musings (usu plural)	statement 2
announcement	dossier	observation 3	stricture 1
comment 2	file 2	proposal	suggestion 1
consultation	gen	question 1,6	talk > 4,5
data	guidance	referendum	tip 9
debate	hint 3 (usu plural)	reflections 6	vote
declaration	information	ruling	word 8
deliberations 2	lecture	run-down 5	
details 2	low-down	sidelight 2	
dirt 4	meditation 3	speech 4	

There are also three nouns which refer to someone who speaks about a subject on behalf of an organization.

The Liberal Democrat **spokesman** on employment, Jim Wallace, argued the Secretary of State had no reason to feel encouraged.

spokesman spokesperson spokeswoman

2 THE 'ARTICLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a piece of writing, a broadcast, or a film.

It was refreshing to find a realistic and intelligent **article** on slimming.

Currently, she is engaged in making a **documentary** on the life and works of one of the most prominent Indian artists, Jehangir Sabarwala.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Remember our recent **feature** on making your own movie? Well, here's your next step.

With many of these nouns, especially *article*, *book*, and *report*, the preposition is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

His **book** on how to be a winner, 'The Will To Win', has reached the best-seller lists.

article	essay	monograph	section 1,3
book	feature 5	paper 6,7	study 3
chapter	film	piece 5	survey
dissertation	item 3	programme	treatise
documentary	leaflet	report 3,4	

3 THE 'CONFERENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a meeting set up to discuss a particular thing.

In Seoul he will attend a regional **conference** on trade issues.

With all of these nouns except *post-mortem*, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The firm will be contributing to a **seminar** on 'Measuring and Managing Risk' at the Law Society on 20 July.

conference	hearing	seminar
congress	post-mortem 2	symposium

4 THE 'IDEAS' GROUP

These nouns refer to thoughts, opinions, or attitudes.

There will have to be **agreement** on that issue if there is to be a successful outcome of these latest talks.

He has promised to meet Mr Redwood to discuss further his **ideas** on the health service.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause.

The **decision** on what to do with the economy has now been put off until Monday.

His **views** on maintaining the family as the bedrock of stability were widely applauded.

agreement	feelings 3	position 8	stand 8
consensus	fix 13	rethink	take 2,42
decision	ideas 2	slant 4	thoughts 4
differences 3	opinion	speculation	verdict 2
disagreement	policy	stance 1	view (usu plural)

5 THE 'EXPERT' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who knows a lot about something.

David Willis, a **specialist on US affairs**, looks at the implications for the President at home and abroad.

In the case of *authority* and *expert*, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause.

Since when has he been an **authority on what children should watch on TV**?

This man is a fighter pilot, but also an **expert on defeating air defenses**.

authority 6	specialist
expert	whizz 2

6 THE 'COMMISSION' GROUP

These nouns refer to an official group of people who give advice about something or deal with something.

In 1993, they jointly prepared a briefing **on the class-size issue for the National Commission on Education**.

commission 5	committee	council 3
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7 THE 'EMPHASIS' GROUP

These nouns refer to emphasis or focus.

But he says the **emphasis on advanced technology** is misplaced.

Concentration, emphasis, focus, and stress are sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*.

The media is often criticised for its **focus upon the perpetrators of violent crime**.

The preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

So that's the reason for all the training, all the **stress on winning**.

accent 3	emphasis	overemphasis
concentration	focus	stress >1

8 THE 'ATTACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a physical or verbal attack on someone or something.

The letter is an **attack on the Prime Minister** from start to finish, and not a particularly well disguised attack.

Security surrounding the Pope has been stepped up since a 1981 **attempt on his life** in Rome.

Teachers' unions attacked Mr Major for what they called a 'class-based' **onslaught on state education**.

Assault, attack, raid, revenge, and slur are sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*.

The **assault upon Leningrad** promptly collapsed.

air raid	attempt 3	onslaught	slur
assault	foul 9	raid	
attack	hatchet job	revenge	

9 THE 'LAW' GROUP

These nouns refer to laws or rules.

Tightening up the law on knives will be a start.

The preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The NHS executive is now drawing up **guidelines on prescribing the drug**.

guidelines	regulation
law	rule (usu plural)

10 THE 'BAN' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions which are intended to stop, control, or restrict something.

Cancer charities yesterday attacked the Government for blocking a European Community **ban on tobacco advertising**.

More than 870 dangerous vehicles have been ordered off the road as a result of a **blitz on defective cars**.

Police started a big **crackdown on tax dodgers** this week which could involve big fines and even imprisonment.

Opposition parties called for stricter **curbs on pollution**.

He asserted that the government isn't committed to a **war on drugs**.

With most of these nouns, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Restrictions on travelling to and trading with mainland China have been loosened.

ban	crackdown	limitation 2	sanction 2
blitz 3	curb	moratorium	squeeze >7
boycott	embargo	prohibition	stricture 2
clampdown	freeze >7, >8, >9	restraint	war 3
controls 10	limit 2	restriction 1	

11 THE 'BURDEN' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that makes things difficult for someone or makes their life stressful.

Older people and people with disabilities are sometimes portrayed as a **burden on society**.

In the western world today, many women lead busy lives with countless **demands on their time**.

Most of these nouns, especially *burden*, *demands*, and *pressure*, are sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*.

The **pressures upon her** have been intense.

Drag is always preceded by the determiner *a*.

The manufacturing sector has been a **drag on the economy** most of this year.

burden calls claim 7	constraint demands 5 drag 8	drain 10 infringement pressure 3,4	restriction 2 strain 1
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12 THE 'WORK' GROUP

These nouns refer to work or action.

Recent **research** on molecular genetics supports this idea.

Tests on carpet samples taken from the flat have not been completed.

Transport Minister Ken Hayward said **work** on the £2.4 million project would begin this month and should be finished by December.

In the case of action, progress, research, and work, the preposition on is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The MPs were 'dismayed' to see so little **progress** on closing down the power station.

action check 1	operation 3 progress	research spot check	test work >5, >9
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13 THE 'BLOW' GROUP

These nouns refer to hitting.

She may have been killed by a **blow** on the head.

Suddenly, there was a **tap** on the window.

bang bash blow	knock pat punch	rap smack tap	thump
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14 THE 'EFFECT' GROUP

These nouns refer to power, influence, or an effect.

He is someone who is very aware of his appearance and its **effect** on people.

Britain's biggest trade union warned yesterday it would not release its **grip** on the Labour Party without a fight.

Bearing, effect, grip, hold, impact, and influence are sometimes followed by upon instead of on.

His **influence** upon me was enormous.

bearing effect grip 3	hold 3,3 impact 1 influence	monopoly 1 stranglehold toehold
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There is also one noun, *influence* 5, which refers to a person or thing that has influence. There is usually an adjective before the noun.

She thought Jenny was a bad **influence** on Mary.

15 THE 'DEPENDENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's dependence on someone or something.

The bill aims to reduce US **dependence** on foreign oil.

They are sometimes followed by upon instead of on.

But, in general, **reliance** upon force is a sign of weakness.

dependence 1	dependency 2	reliance
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16 THE 'TAX' GROUP

These nouns refer to money that you have to pay.

More than a year ago Brazil's government suspended **payments** on the debt.

Motoring organisations reacted angrily to the extra **tax** on petrol and diesel.

duty 4 interest 9	payment surcharge	tariff tax
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17 THE 'PROFIT' GROUP

These nouns refer to money that you gain or do not have to pay.

In-toto Kitchens is offering Club members a 50 per cent **discount** on its Wellmann and Contessa ranges.

The **profits** on a container of tax-free cigarettes are enormous.

38 per cent of people would rather accept a lower **return** on their investment than support a company with a poor ethical record.

discount interest 9 profit	rebate return 13 saving 1	yield 9
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18 THE 'BET' GROUP

These nouns refer to bets.

All **bets** on the contest became void when a second attempt to stage the race was predictably abandoned because of frost.

bet	flutter 3	gamble
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19 THE 'IMPROVEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is better than or different from something else, or is based on something else.

It's a vast **improvement** on her last pop LP.

Michael Roemer's 1969 comedy is a wry **satire** on New York Jewish life.

This volume consists in **variations** on a theme taken from Greek mythology.

advance 11 improvement 2 improvisation >2	increase satire 2 spoof	variation 1
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20 THE 'STAIN' GROUP

These nouns refer to a mark or a non-physical blemish.

The only **blemish on his record** was his dismissal for punching last year during France's 18-16 defeat by Canada in Ontario.

'The Voyager tragedy is a **blot on Australia's proud military history**,' he said.

I realized that the **stains on Constant's shirt** were blood.

blemish 1,2	bruise	excrescence	scar 1
blot 1	cut >2	mark 1	stain 1

21 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

'I had a bit of a **crush on her**. But she didn't know I was alive,' he admits.

Within hours of the Kobe earthquake, shops in Tokyo were reporting a **run on torches, protective helmets and dried food**.

The plan calls for increased government **spending on education** and other reforms to aid people in the inner cities.

Curse, insistence, and reflection are sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*.

This verdict is not to be seen as a **reflection upon Danielle or her evidence**.

In the case of *insistence*, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I marvel at her determination, her energy, her **insistence on taking time for herself every now and then**.

In the case of *handle*, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

The only way we can get a **handle on what's going on** is to actually look there.

Fix and *handle* are always preceded by the determiner *a*.

Mick F got a **fix on a satellite** and sent a 'mission aborted' signal back to the Kremlin.

attempt 4	drag 10	head start	run 42
climb-down	entrance 1,3	hold 1, >1	seal 1,4,5
comment 3	expenditure 1	insistence	spending
course 5	fix 12	monopoly 3	
crush 6	foothold 2	option 3	
curse 4	handle 9	reflection 4	

Other related patterns

Non n for n

The noun is followed by two prepositional phrases, the first beginning with *on*, and the second beginning with *for*.

	Noun	on	noun group	for	noun group
the	pressure	on	governments	for	tougher anti-pollution measures

Nouns with this pattern refer to a situation in which someone or something is pressured or expected to provide something.

The heavy **reliance on Japan for new components and machinery** has brought an increasing trade deficit with that country.

dependence 1	pressure 3
dependency 2	reliance

Non n to-inf

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *on*, and a *to*-infinitive clause.

	Noun	on	noun group	to-infinitive clause
this growing	reliance	on	third parties	to sell products

Nouns with this pattern refer to a situation in which someone has to do something or is expected to do something.

There is no **obligation on employers to employ part-time workers or job sharers**.

There had been **pressure on Jason to leave**.

obligation	pressure 3	reliance
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38 N over n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *over* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause. These patterns are *N over -ing* and *N over wh*.

	Noun	over	noun group/ -ing clause/ wh-clause
wide this	anger	over	the pay offer
	differences	over	how to respond to this event
	furor	over	opening shops on Sunday
	power	over	when it uses its forces

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'DISPUTE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ADVANTAGE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CONTROL' GROUP
- 4 THE 'VICTORY' GROUP
- 5 THE 'FUSS' GROUP
- 6 THE 'GRIEF' GROUP
- 7 THE 'DEBATE' GROUP
- 8 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP
- 9 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'DISPUTE' GROUP

These nouns refer to disputes and fights. The prepositional phrase indicates the cause of the dispute.

The visit was postponed until today after a **dispute over security**.

He was scarred for life during a pub **fight over some spilt beer**.

The generally excellent state of relations between Italy and Tunisia is marred only by some small **quarrels over fishing**.

The **war over trade** will continue.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The source said that there had been **disagreement over paying fund managers the going rate for the job**.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

The two were locked in **conflict over whether the helicopter company should be sold to a European or an American concern**.

argument 2	controversy	dispute 1	squabble
battle 2	deadlock	fight >2,>5	struggle 2
clash >1	differences 3	quarrel 1,2	war 1,2,3
conflict 1	disagreement 2	row 3,1,3,2	

2 THE 'ADVANTAGE' GROUP

These nouns indicate that a person or thing has an advantage over someone or something else, or is better than them in some way.

'I have an **advantage over some of my colleagues** in that I did a science degree first,' he said.

Those umpires and referees who still play sport always will have the **edge over those who do not**.

From time to time the interests of national security must be given **precedence over the demands of justice**.

He insisted their academic work had **priority over everything else**.

advantage 1,3	head start	margin 1	priority 2,3
edge 5	lead 6	precedence	superiority

3 THE 'CONTROL' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact of being in a position of authority, power, or influence.

The end of state **control over every corner of artistic life** was an unparalleled victory for freedom of speech.

It was still thought by many that London could regain its traditional **hegemony over world finance**.

Their **monopoly over much of the south of England** will cover trains as well as buses.

In some cases, the local authority assumes parental **rights over the child**.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

Will it be so easy to do away with the Party's **influence over what is broadcast on the official channels**?

authority	dominance	hegemony	jurisdiction
claim 5	domination	hold 3	mastery 2
control	dominion 1	influence	monopoly

power	rule >5	veto 2
rights	supremacy	

4 THE 'VICTORY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a victory.

Victories over New Zealand sides are as precious as they are rare for Welsh teams.

triumph	victory	win
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5 THE 'FUSS' GROUP

These nouns refer to negative public reactions or undesirable public situations.

Faced with a growing **crisis over education**, the government last night announced an emergency plan to improve secondary schools.

An **outcry over the savaging of a six-year-old girl** pushed the government into announcing emergency legislation banning fighting dogs.

Three more French policemen have been arrested in the growing **scandal over the alleged smuggling of weapons from Lebanon**.

Violence over reports of police corruption has continued for a fifth night.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The **fuss over ending the ban on homosexuals in the military** had died down.

crisis	outcry	scandal 1	trouble 1
furor	outrage 2	storm 2	uproar 2
fuss	protest	tension 1	violence

6 THE 'GRIEF' GROUP

These nouns refer to emotions, attitudes, or states of mind, mostly negative ones. They may be general or individual.

He is consumed by **grief over the death of his beautiful wife Lily**.

He made the announcement amid mounting **pessimism over the chances of reaching agreement on the issue of farm subsidies**.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Benjamin was a teenager racked with **guilt and anxiety over wasting his life**.

In the case of nouns referring to anxiety or uncertainty, the preposition over is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

There were **doubts over whether the experiment would get off the ground**.

agitation	confusion	excitement	reservations
alarm	discontent	frustration	uncertainty
anger	dissatisfaction	grief	worry
anxiety	doubt (usu plural)	guilt	
concern	euphoria	pessimism	

7 THE 'DEBATE' GROUP

These nouns refer to things which are said or written.

He denied most of the **allegations over the rebellion**.

The airline is facing manslaughter charges over an oil tanker disaster which killed five crewmen.

She singled out primary teachers for criticism over the way standards slip between the ages of seven and nine.

Discussions over the pipeline route have been going on for about six months.

As negotiations over a new plan continue, the unpaid interest and penalty payments will be added to the debt.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

This story has once again triggered the debate over using animal organs for human beings.

allegation (usu plural)	criticism	negotiation (usu plural)
charge 4 (usu plural)	debate	question 1 (usu plural)
complaint	discussion	speculation

8 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to an agreement or decision.

The two men apparently reached a compromise over the disputed issue of taxation.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

A bitter row among Cabinet Ministers has forced the government to delay making a decision over widening the M25 to 14 lanes.

The preposition over is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

The allies are not in complete agreement over where outside of NATO territory the force can be deployed.

agreement	compromise	decision
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9 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

The center will be a vast improvement over the refugees' present conditions.

A jury trial over allegations of asbestos contamination is due to get under way next Monday.

improvement 2	publicity 2	question mark 2
problems	question 5 (usu plural)	trial 1

39 N to n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of to and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N to -ing.

	Noun	to	noun group / -ing clause
the	answer	to	this problem
his	aversion	to	flying
the	postscript	to	this tale
a	trip	to	England

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'JOURNEY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'POSTING' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PLANE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ENTRY' GROUP
- 5 THE 'ACCESS' GROUP
- 6 THE 'DOOR' GROUP
- 7 THE 'SHORT CUT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'PROMOTION' GROUP
- 9 THE 'HOSTILITY' AND 'DEVOTION' GROUP
- 10 THE 'KINDNESS' GROUP
- 11 THE 'OBLIGATION' GROUP
- 12 THE 'DAMAGE' GROUP
- 13 THE 'SETBACK' GROUP
- 14 THE 'DANGER' GROUP
- 15 THE 'BARRIER' GROUP
- 16 THE 'MODIFICATIONS' GROUP
- 17 THE 'END' GROUP
- 18 THE 'SOLUTION' GROUP
- 19 THE 'CLIMAX' GROUP
- 20 THE 'RUN-UP' GROUP
- 21 THE 'PREFACE' GROUP
- 22 THE 'ADDITION' GROUP
- 23 THE 'GUIDE' GROUP
- 24 THE 'DONATION' GROUP
- 25 THE 'HELP' GROUP
- 26 THE 'ASSISTANT' GROUP
- 27 THE 'SUCCESSOR' GROUP
- 28 THE 'HEIR' GROUP
- 29 THE 'FATHER' GROUP
- 30 THE 'SPEECH' AND 'LETTER' GROUP
- 31 THE 'MEMORIAL' GROUP
- 32 THE 'RESPONSE' GROUP
- 33 THE 'ALTERNATIVE' GROUP
- 34 THE 'SHOCK' GROUP
- 35 THE 'DISGRACE' GROUP
- 36 THE 'EXAMPLE' GROUP
- 37 THE 'POINTER' GROUP
- 38 THE 'SUBJECTION' GROUP
- 39 THE 'SENSITIVITY' AND 'IMMUNITY' GROUP
- 40 THE 'LINK' GROUP
- 41 THE 'CLAIM' GROUP
- 42 THE 'ASSENT' GROUP
- 43 THE 'ADHERENCE' GROUP
- 44 THE 'REFERENCE' GROUP
- 45 THE 'DRAWBACK' GROUP

- 46 THE 'ATTRACTIVENESS' GROUP
47 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'JOURNEY' GROUP

These nouns refer to journeys or movement.

Once again I must apologise for the disruption to your journey to work this morning.

On his return to England he wrote a book about his experiences.

His prizes include travel to Europe and the chance to study overseas.

His foreign minister has just concluded a three-day visit to China.

climb	expedition	migration	safe passage
cruise	flight	mission 3	tour
dash	foray 2	move	travel
drive	holiday	outing	trek
emigration	immigration	pilgrimage	trip
escape	journey	return 2	visit
excursion	lift	ride	walk

There is also one noun, visitor, which refers to a person who goes somewhere.

The total number of visitors to Hong Kong in 1988 rose 24 per cent from 1987, to almost 5.6 million.

2 THE 'POSTING' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that someone is sent somewhere.

He now faces possible extradition to the United States, where he is wanted on charges of fraud and perjury.

Emmott's big break was a posting to Tokyo in the 1980s.

He is currently on secondment to the Defence Department's strategy and intelligence branch.

assignment 2	referral	transfer >5
extradition	scholarship	
posting	secondment	

There are also two nouns which refer to the fact that something is sent somewhere.

Police followed the signal and found seven vehicles in crates on the dockside at Tilbury, awaiting shipment to Nigeria.

delivery	shipment 2
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There are also several nouns which refer to a person who is sent somewhere.

The new Peruvian ambassador to the US is under orders to brighten Peru's reputation.

ambassador	envoy	representative
delegate	High Commissioner	

There are also two nouns which refer to things that are sent somewhere.

Exports to Europe accounted for a third of that total.

exports	shipment 1
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3 THE 'PLANE' GROUP

These nouns refer to forms of transport.

So three months later I was on a plane to Paris.

boat	coach	taxi
bus	plane	train

4 THE 'ENTRY' GROUP

These nouns refer to the act of entering a place, organization, or field of activity.

To qualify for admission to the University, a candidate must fulfil the University's General Entrance requirement.

Now all visitors who are refused entry to Britain will have no choice but to turn around and leave.

admission 1	entrance 1,4,5	introduction >2
admittance	entry 1,3,7	

There are also two nouns which refer to someone who has recently come to a place, an organization, or a field of activity.

He is a newcomer to politics.

newcomer	recruit
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5 THE 'ACCESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the ability or right to get into a place or see someone or something.

Enthusiasts say that research has been transformed by instant access to global information.

Twenty-five years ago, when I became literary editor of Punch, I received an invitation to a book launch.

access	pass 23
invitation	ticket

6 THE 'DOOR' GROUP

These nouns refer to things, such as doors or roads, which lead to a place.

He opened the door to her room.

Can you tell me the way to the Viking Museum?

approach 2	entrance 1,1	gate	route 1,2
conduit 2	entry 8	gateway 2	way 12
door	exit	road 1	

7 THE 'SHORT CUT' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of getting to a particular position, usually one you want to be in.

The greatest problem is getting young people to believe that training is their **passport** to success.

All-party talks still offer the best **path** to peace.

In the Middle Ages sheep represented the fastest **short-cut** to great wealth.

In the countries of the former Soviet Union, brilliant youngsters with a talent for chess are striving to use the game as a **springboard** to fame and fortune.

With most of these nouns, the preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The **key** to getting the best value for money is to shop extensively before making a choice.

bridge 5	high road 2	pathway 2	springboard 1
fast track	key 7	road 2	stepping stone 1
first step	passport 2	route 4	
gateway 3	path 4	short cut 2	

8 THE 'PROMOTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a change, especially a change of status, activity, organization, or nature.

The move reflects Major's determination to pacify the Tory left following the **defection** to the Liberal Democrats of Emma Nicholson.

Dobson's **promotion** to Chairman left the position of Group Managing Director to be filled.

In the second part, he explores Yeltsin's **rise** to power.

Another factor has been the **switch** to wine drinking.

In the case of return, shift, switch, and transition, the preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The album's most refreshing aspect is Wonder's **return** to writing songs of real quality.

accession	crossover 2	passage 6	shift
appointment 1	defection	progress	swing 8
ascension 2	descent 3	promotion	switch
change	election	regression	transformation
changeover	elevation ◇ 1	return ▷ 7, ▷ 9	transition
climb	lurch	reversion	translation
conversion	move	rise	trend

The following nouns also have the pattern N from n to n: change, changeover, climb, conversion, crossover, descent, elevation, move, passage, promotion, rise, shift, switch, transformation, transition, and translation.

I was glad to make the **change** from a small department to a large department.

There is also one noun, convert, which refers to a person who changes from one religion or view to another.

Engels was already a **convert** to socialist theory, and what he saw in Manchester confirmed his beliefs.

9 THE 'HOSTILITY' AND 'DEVOTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to people's attitudes or feelings about something.

'Privatisation will change a lot of people's **attitudes** to work,' he believes.

Their **devotion** to the cause remains absolute.

How else did his **hostility** to women show itself?

Opposition to the government has been mounting since the United Nations imposed sanctions two weeks ago.

In the case of addiction, approach, attitude, aversion, dedication, devotion, opposition, reaction, and resistance, the preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Our **dedication** to maintaining those standards has helped us build a national reputation for coffee quality.

addiction 2	attachment 1	disloyalty	loyalty
allegiance	attitude	fidelity 1	obedience
allergy 2	aversion	gratitude	opposition
antagonism	dedication	homage	reaction
antipathy	deference	hostility	resistance
approach 5	devotion	indifference	

10 THE 'KINDNESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to kind or unkind behaviour.

Animal experiments upset the youngsters most, followed by **cruelty** to pets and fox hunting.

We, the British, are renowned for our **kindness** to animals.

cruelty	injustice	leniency
inhumanity	kindness	

11 THE 'OBLIGATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that someone owes someone something or should do something for them.

Both acknowledge their **debt** to him.

They are basically saying they have no **obligation** to their customers.

debt	indebtedness	responsibility
duty	obligation	

Duty, obligation, and responsibility also have the pattern N to n to-inf.

They have a **duty** to their clients to undertake transactions for them as cheaply as possible.

12 THE 'DAMAGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to physical damage.

The Department of Transport has admitted for the first time that its pro-road policies have failed to take into account **damage** to the environment.

Hamed, who is recovering from a **fracture** to his right hand, said: 'He's not even a fourth division fighter.'

blow 2,1	damage 3	harm 2	punch
cut ▷ 2	fracture	injury 1	wound 1

13 THE 'SETBACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to or describe events or situations that have a negative or harmful effect. In the case of loss, which is used to indicate that the absence of someone or

something has a negative effect, the Subject may refer to the person or thing or to their absence.

Mixed wards are an **affront** to patients' dignity.

The perception that he has lost his way is an incalculable **blow** to Republican morale.

The **cost** to the taxpayer could be up to £1bn.

We regret the **delay** to your journey.

He'll be a great **loss** to the club.

The massacre in Ciskei could be a serious **setback** to efforts to resume constitutional talks.

affront	damage 4	injury 2	setback
blow 2,2	delay	insult	
consequences	disruption	interruption 0,2	
cost	disservice	loss 6	

14 THE 'DANGER' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that may harm someone or something, or to the possibility of harm.

This man is a **danger** to the community.

The longer a person smokes the more dangerous it becomes, so starting to smoke when young seriously increases the **risk** to health.

danger 2	menace	threat 1
hazard	risk	

15 THE 'BARRIER' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that prevent or limit something, or make it difficult for someone to do something.

The National Consumer Council has claimed that the European car market is riddled with **barriers** to trade and competition.

My busy over-educated brain is a positive **hindrance** to prayer.

Limit and limitation are often used with there.

There is a **limit** to the amount of money that can go into the health service.

With most of these nouns, the preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The main **obstacle** to reforming the economy is managers' and employees' lack of interest in the results of their labor.

bar 11	disincentive	limit	stumbling block
barrier 1	hindrance	limitation	
burden	impediment	obstacle 2	

16 THE 'MODIFICATIONS' GROUP

These nouns refer to changes that are made to something.

There were calls for **improvements** to the rail network.

The **modifications** to the car cost Ford about £100 per car, which the company says will not be passed along to consumers.

Anglian Water now offers a specialist plumbing insurance package which covers the cost of **repairs** to internal and external pipes.

adjustment	change	modifications	repairs
alteration	cuts 0,7	refinement 1	
amendment	improvements	reforms	

17 THE 'END' GROUP

These nouns refer to the stopping of something, or to the event that stops it.

People believed that this would bring about an **end** to the war.

Death blow is typically used with deal. Stop is typically used with put.

The strike appears to have dealt a **death blow** to detailed negotiations between prison unions and prison management.

It's time to **put a stop** to all this nonsense.

death 3	halt 5	stop 15
death blow	kiss of death	
end 3	settlement 1	

18 THE 'SOLUTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to solutions to a problem, or things that help to solve a problem.

What he needed was some **clue** to the victim's identity.

I explained to Mr Trimble that tablets were unlikely to be the best **solution** to his problem.

answer 7,8	clue	settlement 1
antidote 2	resolution 4	solution

19 THE 'CLIMAX' GROUP

These nouns refer to the end part of an event or process.

In a dramatic **climax** to the match Sunnybank were awarded a penalty after Solofa was ruled to have illegally crossed the tryline.

climax	conclusion	finale
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20 THE 'RUN-UP' GROUP

These nouns refer to the things that happen before a particular event begins, or to the first part of an event or process.

The final **countdown** to Christmas has brought the usual last minute rush of shoppers onto the streets.

The event is a **prelude** to the World Match Race Tournament next month.

John Major says he intends to make education the key issue in the **run-up** to the election.

Coventry haven't had a brilliant **start** to the season but they're not doing too badly.

In the case of most of these nouns, especially prelude, the preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The banks plan to open for only three days this week, possibly as a **prelude** to suspending their transactions permanently.

build-up	opening	prelude	start
countdown	precondition	prologue 2	
lead-up	preliminary	run-up	

21 THE 'PREFACE' GROUP

These nouns refer to part of something written that comes before the main part. We include here *overture*, which refers to the introductory part of a piece of music.

R. B. Clark makes this point in the *preface* to the third edition of his book 'Marine Pollution'.

Paul, also 50, wrote the *introduction* to Linda's book himself.

foreword	overture 1	preface
introduction 1	preamble	prologue 1

22 THE 'ADDITION' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is added to something else or is a less important part of something.

There was no sign of the latest *addition* to the Cruise family – two-month-old adopted son Connor.

The Gulf War forms the dramatic *backdrop* to this fast-paced thriller from Frederick Forsyth.

Crab apple jelly is a fantastic *complement* to both hot and cold meats.

'Independence Day', Richard Ford's *sequel* to his greatest success, 'The Sportswriter', has had some lukewarm reviews.

accompaniment	appendix	foil 3	sideshow 1
addendum	backdrop	follow-on	soundtrack
addition	background	follow-up	supplement
adjunct	coda	postscript	
annexe	complement	prequel	
appendage	extension	sequel	

23 THE 'GUIDE' GROUP

These nouns refer to books that give you information or instructions.

In 1956 he published a textbook, *Introduction* to Mathematical Logic, which is still widely quoted.

In the case of *guide* and *introduction*, the preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Money's No Object is a practical *guide* to taking responsibility for your money and financial planning.

companion	guidebook
guide	introduction 2

24 THE 'DONATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to things or amounts of money that are given to someone.

But a large majority of delegates are expected to reject any *concessions* to the smaller parties.

We recommended that all *donations* to charities be tax exempt.

As a result, the Bank says it is planning a tougher policy on *loans* to small businesses.

The unprecedented punishment was ordered after the club admitted making irregular *payments* to players over a five year period.

award 2,3	compensation	gift	rebate
bequest	concession	loan	sop
bonus	contribution	offerings	subsidy
bribe	donation	payment	

There are also two nouns which refer to a person who gives something.

The growth in *subscribers* to the Internet is continuing at a phenomenal rate.

contributor	subscriber
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25 THE 'HELP' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that helps or encourages someone or something.

You must underline the *benefit* to the community of your project.

She says the trains provided a much-needed *boost* to the local economy.

She has been a great *help* to me.

advantage	boost	incentive	stimulus
aid 1,5	comfort	incitement	support
assistance	encouragement	inducement	
benefit	fillip	lifeline	
boon	help	spur	

There is also one noun, *accessory*, which refers to a person who helps in a crime.

At his trial he was accused of being an *accessory* to murder.

26 THE 'ASSISTANT' GROUP

These nouns refer to people whose job is to assist, advise, or serve someone. We include here *partner*, which refers to someone who works closely with someone else.

The offer of a post as economic *adviser* to the president nevertheless came as a surprise.

Bobby Gould, the new manager of Wales, was *coach* to the Norwegian club Aalesund in the mid-Seventies.

adviser	coach	mentor	supplier
aide	consultant	nanny	trainer
assistant	deputy	partner	
astrologer	equerry	physician	
chaplain	handmaiden	secretary	

There is also one noun, *service*, which refers to work that someone does for someone.

Popular Black magazine Essence has honoured eight prominent African-American women for their *services* to the community.

27 THE 'SUCCESSOR' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who does, may do, or would like to have the same job or

position as someone else.

Powell had emerged in recent polls as the only serious **challenger** to Bob Dole for the Republican nomination.

I think Peter Reid will prove a worthy **successor** to Howard Kendall.

apprentice	counterpart	successor
challenger	runner-up	understudy

28 THE 'HEIR' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone who is going to inherit something.

Prince William, **heir to the British throne**, was taken in hand by the boys' nanny so that he could learn to fly a kite.

heir	heir apparent	heirress
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29 THE 'FATHER' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the kind of relationship that one person has to another.

He is now better at being a **father** to his children, Troy, seven, and Ali, five.

Friend, husband, and wife are typically used with the adjective *good*.

Kevin's been a **good friend** to me.

brother	father	husband	sister
cousin	father figure	kin	son
daughter	friend	mother	wife

30 THE 'SPEECH' AND 'LETTER' GROUP

These nouns refer to speech and writing.

His **advice** to parents who find themselves in a similar situation is: 'Find a local lawyer immediately and get in touch with your MP.'

I asked the warden to put in a **call** to you here but he wouldn't.

This plan was outlined in a **letter** to the leadership of the European Community.

I wrote to you and tried to explain without breaking my **promise** to Bob.

In a **speech** to diplomats and businessmen in Washington, he said the key to prosperity in the hemisphere was trade, not aid.

In a written **statement** to the court, Mr Gardner said she became very cross with him because she thought he had reported her to the police.

Words is used with a possessive.

His first **words** to Christa were, 'Something has to change, don't you think?'

address ▽ 3	complaint	letter	prayer	speech 4
advice	directive	memo	presentation 3	statement
apology	epistle	message	promise	submission 3
appeal 2	evidence	note	rebuke	warning
approach ▽ 3	hint	overtures 2	report	words 2
broadcast	instructions	petition	representations 3	
call 7	lecture	plea	request	

31 THE 'MEMORIAL' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is done, said, or made in order to honour or commemorate someone or something.

A **memorial** to the broadcaster Richard Dimbleby, who died in 1965 aged 52, was unveiled in Westminster Abbey.

The groom then proposes a **toast** to the bridesmaids.

His last important public appearance was at the Montreux Jazz Festival in a **tribute** to Gil Evans.

eulogy	memorial 1,3	salute 2	tribute 1
homage	monument 1	shrine	
hymn 2	paean	toast 3	

32 THE 'RESPONSE' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is said or done in response to something.

The **answer** to that question is yes.

To date there has been no **reply** to these letters.

The move was seen as a **response** to pressure from China, which opposes full democracy here.

In the case of reaction and response, the preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The vets said it was a nervous **reaction** to being moved away from her usual environment.

answer 2,5,10,12	rebuttal	riposte
counterblast	reply	
reaction 1,7	response	

33 THE 'ALTERNATIVE' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is different from something else, or that balances or opposes something else.

They believed in lighter custodial sentences and **alternatives** to prison.

The severe weakening of Iran in the Iran-Iraq war left the Persian Gulf region without a **counterbalance** to Iraqi power.

It may have been chaos at times, but this year's Venice Festival looks as if it can now become a real **rival** to Cannes.

In the case of *alternative*, the preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The **alternative** to spending a lot of money is to buy second-hand.

alternative	corrective	counterpoint
competitor 1	counter 3	counterweight
contrast	counterbalance	rival

34 THE 'SHOCK' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate someone's feelings about something, or the extent of their knowledge about something. The noun group *after to* indicates the person

concerned.

These nouns are usually used after a link verb or the preposition *as*.

*The fact that nothing concrete has come out of the meeting will be a **disappointment** to many observers.*

*How does it happen? It's a **mystery** to me.*

*I was totally unaware that Polly and my husband were having an affair. It has come as a great **shock** to me.*

anathema	embarrassment	puzzle	surprise
blow	joy	relief	worry
closed book	mystery	revelation	
disappointment	news	shock	

35 THE 'DISGRACE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone is good or bad in some way. The noun after *to* refers to people closely connected with that person.

These nouns are usually used after a link verb or the preposition *as*.

*They are charming, polite, and a **credit** to their parents.*

*Mr Justice Dyson described him as a **disgrace** to his profession.*

credit 9	disgrace 3	reproach 4
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36 THE 'EXAMPLE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something or someone makes, or should make, a person or group of people want to behave in a particular way.

These nouns are usually used after a link verb or the preposition *as*.

*The prosecution called for a prison sentence for Mr Torr as a **deterrent** to others.*

*Sister Ethel's quiet nobility is an **example** to us all.*

*Well, let that be a **lesson** to you.*

beacon 2	inspiration 2	role model
deterrent	lesson 2	signal 3
example 4	reminder 1	warning

Signal, reminder, and warning also have the pattern N to n that.

*It was a healthy **reminder** to politicians that in a free financial world their powers are limited.*

37 THE 'POINTER' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something shows something.

*A rise in children's pocket money is being hailed as a **pointer** to an upturn in the economy.*

*Those victories are an eloquent **testimony** to the power of a legend.*

index 5	signpost 2	tribute 2
monument 3	testament 1	
pointer 2	testimony 2	

38 THE 'SUBJECTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a situation in which a person or group is controlled or oppressed by someone or something, or to the act of giving in to someone or something.

*They say that its inhabitants are 'slaves of foreigners', emasculated by **subjection** to foreign rule.*

*It must abandon this policy of abject **surrender** to terrorists and stand up for law, order, justice and the United Kingdom.*

bondage 2	subjection	surrender
capitulation	subordination	
enslavement	subservience	

There are also two nouns which refer to someone who is controlled by something.

*Now that I have got my cholesterol levels down a bit, I'm not such a **slave** to the diet.*

hostage 3	slave
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39 THE 'SENSITIVITY' AND 'IMMUNITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a tendency to be affected by something or to suffer from something, or the opposite.

*People can develop a natural **immunity** to malaria after many years' exposure to it.*

*People with the gene have a **predisposition** to alcoholism.*

*But in both types of migraine the headache is accompanied by nausea and vomiting, and intense **sensitivity** to light and noise.*

With many of these nouns, especially *addiction*, *predisposition*, *resistance*, and *susceptibility*, the preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*The wood is carefully selected for its **resistance** to cracking and splitting.*

addiction 1	intolerance	resistance 3	tendency
allergy 1	predisposition	sensitivity 5	tolerance 3
immunity 1	propensity	susceptibility	vulnerability

There are also two nouns which refer to a person who is affected by something, or likely to be.

*According to one estimate, a third of all children under five in the Third World are undernourished and **prey** to disease.*

martyr 4	prey 6
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40 THE 'LINK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a link or similarity between one thing or person and another.

*This reasoning assumes that our present physical theories are a good **approximation** to the truth.*

*'It is the **links** to the local community that are the biggest strength of regional newspapers,' he says.*

*Scientific staff will be on hand to demonstrate and discuss their work and its **relevance** to current issues in Scottish agriculture.*

The modern army, in fact, bears little **resemblance** to the army of 1940, 1950 or 1960.

affiliation	likeness	relation 2	similarity
affinity	link	relationship 3	ties 10
approximation	marriage	relevance	
connection	parallel	resemblance	

41 THE 'CLAIM' GROUP

These nouns refer to a claim that someone has or makes to something.

In the past, any royal marrying a Catholic has had to renounce their **claim** to the throne. People have a **right** to privacy.

claim 5	pretension 2 (usu plural)
entitlement	right 3.2

There are also two nouns which refer to someone who is claiming something.

There are now reports that Prince Alexander, who is the **pretender** to the Serbian throne, is expected in Belgrade this week.

claimant	pretender
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42 THE 'ASSENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to agreement or support.

John Major last night secured French **agreement** to an emergency meeting of the big powers in London on Friday.

The governor-general could call elections and could withhold his **assent** to legislation.

acquiescence	assent	lip service
agreement	consent	

43 THE 'ADHERENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the act of sticking to a belief, rule, or text.

For her courage and her **adherence** to her principles she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

adherence	conformity	fidelity 3
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44 THE 'REFERENCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the act of referring to something. *Analogy* and *comparison* are more frequently used with *with*.

Skillfully Bush slipped in a **reference** to his own military service, as a shot-down Second World War pilot.

allusion	comparison
analogy	reference

45 THE 'DRAWBACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a good or bad aspect of something.

But we are also discovering many **drawbacks** to this mode of transportation, including unsuspected acute and chronic health problems.

The preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Though his flat wasn't as spacious as Hannah's on the floor below, there were definite **advantages** to being at the top of the building.

advantage	downside	drawback
-----------	----------	----------

46 THE 'ATTRACTIVENESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a good quality.

This detracted from the appearance of the property and permanently reduced its **attractiveness** to potential buyers.

Coronary heart disease commonly attacks men at the peak of their productive capacity and **usefulness** to society.

appeal 7	attractiveness	worth
attraction	usefulness	

47 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Economic liberalisation invariably leads to demands for political reform, and Albania is no **exception** to that rule.

The 'liquidators' worked under fairly strict control to limit their **exposure** to radiation.

The Great Barrier Reef is **home** to more than 1,500 species of fish and countless crustaceans and molluscs.

I don't propose to be a **party** to anything of this nature, Corporal Devereux.

Mr Micklethwaite said he hoped the matter could be settled without **recourse** to litigation.

Brewer is no **stranger** to controversy. In 1979 he admitted to a medical journal that he had tried to give a lethal dose of drugs to a patient with terminal cancer.

Cities tend to grind to a halt after 10pm – a **throwback** to the days of wartime curfew and Communist puritanism.

He was a **traitor** to his country.

But in another bizarre **twist** to the case which has obsessed America, their finding will remain sealed until 10am today.

In the case of *commitment* and *objection*, the preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The party reaffirms its **commitment** to reducing Britain's use of nuclear power but avoids setting any deadline for achieving it.

In the case of *objection*, the preposition *to* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is N to n-ing.

I have absolutely no **objection** to such people playing a full part in achieving the aims of the Labour Party.

accessibility	exposure 1	objection	signatory
adaptation	favour 2	offer	stranger 4
antibodies	flashback	party 6	superiority
application 2	forerunner	precursor	supply 3
attention	home 2,8	proximity	throwback
blindness 4	host 9	recourse	traitor
challenge 3	input	resort 2	twist 8
closeness	line 10	sale 1	witness 1
commitment 1,3	listeners	sales 2	
directions	martyr 1	second nature	
exception	means	sell-out 2	

Other related patterns

N from n to n

See meaning group 8 above.

N of n to n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of* and another prepositional phrase beginning with *to*.

Look for a ratio of two trained adults to every 26 children.

proportion 3 ratio

N to n that

See meaning group 36 above.

N to n to-inf

See meaning group 11 above.

of N to n

See Section 68.

40 N towards n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *towards* or *toward* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

	Noun	towards/toward	noun group/-ing clause
	hostility	towards	foreigners
a	move	toward	ending the protest
a	predisposition	towards	ill health

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'HATRED' GROUP
- 2 THE 'GENEROSITY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PROGRESS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ROAD' GROUP
- 5 THE 'TENDENCY' GROUP
- 6 THE 'CONTRIBUTION' GROUP
- 7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'HATRED' GROUP

These nouns refer to attitudes and feelings. Most of them refer to specific attitudes or feelings, but *approach*, *attitude*, *feelings*, *line*, *policy*, and *stance* are more general.

The socialists have been weighed down by their past and paralysed by ambivalence toward reform.

Steinem fought and fought again to change men's attitudes towards women and women's attitudes to themselves.

I wasn't actually sure of your true feelings towards Nicole.

We harbour no hatred towards you.

Hospital Director Victor Lucero detects a certain indifference towards the epidemic.

In the case of *approach*, *attitude*, *bias*, and *policy*, the preposition *towards* or *toward* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

What's your approach towards feeding your children?

aggression 1	attitude	hatred	sensitivity 4
ambivalence	bias	hostility 2	stance 1
anger	bitterness	ill-will	sympathy
animosity	compassion	indifference	tenderness
antagonism	cynicism	intolerance	tolerance
antipathy	enmity	line 20	warmth
apathy	feelings	policy	
approach 5	goodwill	resentment	

2 THE 'GENEROSITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to behaviour. Most of them refer to specific types of behaviour. *Advances*, *behaviour*, *conduct*, and *gesture* are more general.

In Australia this year she was fined for offensive behaviour towards an air stewardess.

Privat, a big colourful man, was known for his generosity towards other musicians.

Leniency towards former rebels also offended loyalists.

But for a long time, Sarah would not discuss George's violence toward her.

advances 9	clemency	favouritism	leniency
aggression 2	conduct	generosity	violence
behaviour	coolness	gesture	
benevolence	deference	hostility 1	

3 THE 'PROGRESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to progress or change.

Movement towards all-party talks was now inexorable.

We are looking at their progress towards democracy.

The shift towards flexible working hours means that the old standard of 'nine-to-five' may well soon be a thing of the past.

Remember that it was Proposition 13 in California back in the 1970s that started the whole trend towards lower tax rates.

With many of these nouns, especially *drive*, *move*, *movement*, *progress*, *shift*, *step*, and *trend*, the preposition *towards* or *toward* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The capital-gains tax reform is a step toward correcting one of the gravest structural weaknesses of the U.S. economy.

advance 10	journey 2	progression	start
change	march 5	push >7	step 5
drift	momentum	rush 4	swing 8
drive 17	move 10	shift	tilt 5
evolution 2	movement 4	slide	trend
impetus	progress	stampede 3	

4 THE 'ROAD' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of getting to a particular position, usually one you want to be in.

Any experience on the road towards whatever goal you set yourself can be useful, even if it's not obvious.

The preposition *towards* or *toward* is occasionally followed by an '-ing' clause.

He made it clear he regarded the acquisition of the French player as a huge stepping stone towards winning the title.

course 3	road 2	stepping stone 1
path 4	route 4	

5 THE 'TENDENCY' GROUP

These nouns refer to a tendency or desire to do, be, or have a particular thing.

In the preface, Lacey confesses to being a lifelong ecologist with leanings towards vegetarianism.

He berated me for a tendency towards flippancy.

In the case of *inclination* and *tendency*, the preposition *towards* or *toward* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

At that particular time, Kevin showed no inclination towards being a manager.

impulse	leaning	predisposition
inclination	orientation	tendency

6 THE 'CONTRIBUTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that helps to make up the amount of something that is needed.

Family Credit payments include a contribution towards the cost of school meals.

The deal includes a £10 voucher towards an evening meal.

contribution	grant	money	token 2
donation	help	point 10	voucher

7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

Surely that meant his intentions toward her were honorable and serious?

There is even the occasional nod towards mysticism and Eastern philosophy.

The Classic Cars price guide can only give you pointers towards the value of a vehicle.

intentions	pointer 2
nod	responsibility 6

41 N with n

The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *with* and a noun group. With some nouns, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **N with -ing**.

	Noun	with	noun group / -ing clause
their	help	with	finding employment
his successful	dissatisfaction	with	the leadership
the	partnership	with	Colin Montgomerie
	war	with	America

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'DISGUST' AND 'OBSESSION' GROUP
- 2 THE 'POPULARITY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SIMILARITY' GROUP
- 4 THE 'COMPARISON' GROUP
- 5 THE 'RELATIONSHIP' GROUP
- 6 THE 'MERGER' GROUP
- 7 THE 'SPLIT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'FIGHT' GROUP
- 9 THE 'RECONCILIATION' GROUP
- 10 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP
- 11 THE 'MEETING' GROUP
- 12 THE 'CONVERSATION' GROUP
- 13 THE 'INVOLVEMENT' GROUP
- 14 THE 'COLLABORATION' GROUP
- 15 THE 'HELP' GROUP
- 16 THE 'FAMILIARITY' GROUP
- 17 THE 'SKILL' GROUP
- 18 THE 'TROUBLE' GROUP
- 19 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'DISGUST' AND 'OBSESSION' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings.

He was known almost equally for his **concern** with social justice and for his books on prayer.
Disgust with state politics has not, however, abated.

We have considerable **sympathy** with our Spanish colleagues.

In the case of *fascination*, *fixation*, and *obsession*, the preposition *with* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Where did this **obsession** with finding happiness come from?

Patience is usually used with the verb *lose*, or is used in the expressions *have no patience* or *have little patience*.

The manager occasionally lost **patience** with his players.

absorption	discomfort	exasperation	love affair 2
affinity 1	discontent	fascination	obsession
anger	disenchantment	fixation	patience
annoyance	disgust	frustration	preoccupation
boredom	disillusionment	identification 5	satisfaction
concern	displeasure	impatience	sympathy
disaffection	dissatisfaction	infatuation	unease
disappointment	empathy	irritation	unhappiness

2 THE 'POPULARITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that someone or something is popular or respected.

His **credibility** with the financial markets will be significantly enhanced if his gamble pays off, analysts said.

The band's immense **popularity** with children has caught even the band members themselves by surprise.

Favour is usually used with the verb *find* or *win*.

The proposals are also likely to find **favour** with both Clare Spottiswoode, the industry regulator, and the Government.

credibility favour popularity

There are also two nouns which describe a person or thing that is popular.

The ad is a big **hit** with viewers, especially the kids.

favourite hit

3 THE 'SIMILARITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that one thing is similar or equal to another, or, in the case of contrast, different from another.

We had read articles by her in which she defended women's right to education, to work and to **equality** with men.

There seem to be **similarities** with the attack on the World Trade Centre and similar bombings elsewhere.

affinity 2 continuity equality parity
compatibility contrast parallel similarity

4 THE 'COMPARISON' GROUP

These nouns refer to the making of a comparison.

Moodley makes a **comparison** with the French Resistance: 'Our activities are seen as illegal, but we see them as moral.'

Equation and *identification* are usually used with the pattern *N of n with n*.

The **identification** of democracy with the ideology of socialism was at least controversial if not dangerous.

analogy equation
comparison identification 4

5 THE 'RELATIONSHIP' GROUP

These nouns refer to relationships or links. These are usually between people but can be between things, as in the case of *connection*, *correlation*, and *link*.

His **affair** with Judy Garland was an open secret in Hollywood.

Under Stalin, economics did indeed move backwards. It lost any **connection** with real life and statistics.

Did you find out the extent of her **friendship** with Mr Stevens?

The Foreign Office is insisting that Britain wants better **relations** with Iran but had to act when public order was threatened.

I have a very close **relationship** with both my parents.

France has maintained close political and cultural **ties** with its former colonies in Africa.

acquaintance 2	coalition	intimacy	relationship
acquaintanceship	connection	kinship	romance
adultery	correlation	liaison 3	sex
affair	dalliance 1	link	solidarity
affiliation	fellowship	link-up	sympathy
alignment	fling	love affair 1	ties 10
alliance	flirtation	oneness	unity
association	friendship	partnership	
bond	infidelity	rapport	
closeness	intercourse	relations 1	

6 THE 'MERGER' GROUP

These nouns refer to the coming together of two organizations or countries.

I believe that the **merger** with Pearson secures the long-term future of the company.

They said they wanted 'complete **unification** with Serbia'.

merger unification
reunification union 2

7 THE 'SPLIT' GROUP

These nouns refer to the end of a relationship.

The hurt of his **split** with his childhood sweetheart Cindy runs deep.

breach 3 rupture 5
break >10 split 3

8 THE 'FIGHT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a fight, argument, contest, or sports match. We include here *collision* course, which refers to the fact that there is likely to be conflict between people.

Former Test batsman Michael Bevan may miss the Sheffield Shield **clash** with Queensland next week after breaking a thumb yesterday.

Britain is on a **collision course** with its EC partners over a £1.8 billion rebate won by ex-Premier Margaret Thatcher.

His long-standing **feud** with Barbra Streisand has resulted in two court actions so far.

I never had **fights** with my brothers and sisters.

Raquel Welch stormed out of a London Palladium TV spectacular after a **row** with Bob Hope.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin may be facing a **showdown** with his political opponents.

In the case of *battle* and *struggle*, the noun group after *with* may refer to a thing rather than a person.

Whitten died on Thursday evening after losing his **battle** with cancer.

altercation	contest	game	showdown
argument	contretemps	joust	skirmish
battle	differences 3	match	spat
bout	disagreement	punch-up	squabble
brawl	dispute	quarrel	stand-off
brush 7	draw	replay	struggle
bust-up	duel	rivalry	tie 12
clash	feud	row	tussle
collision course 1	fight	run-in	war
combat	final	scrap	wrangle
conflict	fracas	scuffle	
confrontation	friction 1	shouting match	

9 THE 'RECONCILIATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the ending of fighting or bad feeling between two countries, groups, or people.

The duke continued his campaign for **peace** with Germany.

This news intensified pressure within the United States for a **rapprochement** with Spain.

She was also asked if there was a chance of a **reconciliation** with Andrew.

ceasefire	rapprochement	truce
detente	reconciliation	
peace	settlement	

10 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to agreements made by two people or groups.

On 5 February, the council entered into an **agreement** with her, under which she could continue to live in the flat so long as she paid her rent arrears.

His **contract** with Benetton has not been renewed for next season.

Bargain is usually used with the verb *make* or *strike*.

All those years ago, she'd made a **bargain** with me. I'd kept it, and I knew she would have done too.

accommodation 3	bargain	covenant	understanding 5
accord	bet	deal	
agreement	compromise	pact	
arrangement 2	contract	treaty	

Agreement, contract, and deal also have the pattern **N with n for n**.

The engineering union, the AEU, has announced an **agreement** with the car manufacturers, Rover, for a shorter working week.

Agreement, arrangement, contract, deal, and pact also have the pattern **N with n to-inf**.

The company suffered from the loss of a **contract** with General Motors to supply catalytic convertors, which help clean exhaust fumes.

Arrangement, bet, pact, and understanding also have the pattern **N with n that**.

Spotting the local tourist office, I lost a 10,000 lire **bet** with my sons that it would not be open.

11 THE 'MEETING' GROUP

These nouns refer to meetings, or arrangements to meet.

The only appropriate thing to do is make an **appointment** with your doctor.

The decision to grant Chief Buthelezi an **audience** with Mr Mandela was a difficult one for the ANC leadership.

So that made it even more important to try to keep his **date** with actress Uma Thurman a secret.

Britain's shadow Chancellor is in Washington for a series of **meetings** with senior American economics officials.

appointment	briefing	meeting	summit
assignment	contact	rendezvous	tryst
audience 4	date 8	reunion	

12 THE 'CONVERSATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to communication with someone.

It was so embarrassing trying to have a **conversation** with someone I've never met.

Although she always denied it, Eleanor's frequent **discussions** with Franklin undoubtedly influenced his decisions.

Liz, 29, told of her new plans in an **interview** with her former flatmate, journalist William Cash.

Word is usually preceded by the determiner *a*, or is used in the expression *a few words*.

'I want a **word** with you,' she said.

banter	consultation	debate	negotiation
chat	contact	discussion	talk >2, >3
communication	conversation	exchange	talks 5
communion 1	correspondence	interview	word 4

There is also one noun, *liaison* 2, which refers to a person who encourages communication between two groups.

André is deeply involved with the Resistance; he now serves as liaison with the British.

13 THE 'INVOLVEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's involvement with someone or something, or experience of something.

After this brush with death, he was radically changed.

He was arrested in 1969 under suspicion of having secret dealings with rebel groups.

His first encounter with poetry had been the Tennyson given him by his father.

The White House asked for a special prosecutor to investigate Bill Clinton's involvement with a failed savings and loan association in Arkansas in the 1980s.

In the case of experience, the preposition *with* is occasionally followed by an '-ing' clause.

He'd probably had long experience with dealing with insults.

Fun is usually used with the verb *have*.

Have fun with science through hands-on exhibits.

brush 8	entanglement	interaction	transaction
dalliance 2	experience	interference	work
dealings	experiment	involvement	
encounter	fun	tangle	
engagement 4	gamble	trade	

14 THE 'COLLABORATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that two or more people or groups do something together, or to something that people achieve or produce together.

He feels his collaboration with the band Art of Noise in 1988 was a career milestone.

They ruled out cooperation with the Slovak National party.

Bono has been talking about his duet with Frank Sinatra, recorded for Sinatra's first studio album in 10 years.

collaboration	complicity	coordination	duet
collusion	cooperation	co-production	joint venture

15 THE 'HELP' GROUP

These nouns refer to help.

For instance, I once went to a psychic for help with a difficult decision.

The preposition *with* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

But when they asked the state for assistance with hiring a nanny, they received no response.

Hand is always preceded by the determiner *a*.

Want a hand with your bags?

assistance	hand 4	help
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16 THE 'FAMILIARITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to knowledge or ignorance of something.

Depending on your purpose and your reader's familiarity with a subject, you may want to include the following additional information.

acquaintance 3	familiarity	unfamiliarity
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17 THE 'SKILL' GROUP

These nouns refer to skill.

The immensely clever piece revealed Steinem's skill with words, as well as her sense of humor.

He had a way with people.

ability	knack	way
facility	skill	
flair	talent	

There are also three nouns which describe a person who has skill in relation to a particular thing.

Eisen is a genius with fabrics, mixing them like a DJ mixes tracks.

expert	genius	wizard
--------	--------	--------

18 THE 'TROUBLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to problems.

He did not envisage many difficulties with local landowners because the tracks are in existence and the right of way is not new.

There have been no problems with the team.

In the case of *difficulty* and *problems*, the preposition *with* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

She had difficulty with coming to terms with what her father had done to her.

Difficulty (the singular form) and *trouble* are usually used with the verb *have*.

'I was having trouble with my brakes and that allowed Mark to make up a lot of ground in those last three laps,' Bright said.

bother	problem
difficulty	trouble

19 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

She had an account with the Newtown branch of the Southland Bank.

The following month, a meeting is to be held in Paris about Germany's border with Poland. Symptoms usually appear any time from a few days to 6 weeks after contact with the infection.

I have no quarrel with the overall tone of David Cohen's analysis of European terrorism.

Treatment with a synthetic form of this chemical, levadopa, relieves symptoms for a time.

Line is usually used with the verb *take*.

If there is any evidence of corruption, UEFA have already shown they will take a tough line with offending clubs.

Refuge is always used with the verbs seek, take, or find.

After the soldiers left, he says he sought refuge with friends.

account 1	compliance	influence	refuge
border	conformity	integration	replacement 1
chance	confusion ◊ 1	line 20	situation
check > 1	contact 7	quarrel 4	success
collision	frontier	quibble	swap
collision course 2	infection ◊ 1	reaction 6	treatment 1

Productive uses

A prepositional phrase beginning with *with* can be used after many other nouns of certain general kinds.

- 1 The prepositional phrase is used after nouns referring to employment, as in *a job with a plastics firm*, *a career with Rover*, or nouns referring to people with a particular job, as in *a consultant with Gartner group*.
- 2 The prepositional phrase is used after nouns referring to activities, meals, or periods of time to indicate who someone is with, as in *a walk with her husband*, *dinner with friends*, *an evening with Della*.

Other related patterns

N of n with n

See meaning group 4 above.

N with n for n

See meaning group 10 above.

N with n that

See meaning group 10 above.

N with n to-inf

See meaning group 10 above.

the N with n be that

See Section 42, Other related patterns.

42 the N be that

The noun is preceded by *the* and is followed by a form of the verb *be* and a *that*-clause.

	Noun	be	that-clause
The	hope	is	that the lighthouse will draw visitors.
The	indications	are	that she is on the way to being very famous.

These nouns belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ANSWER' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP
- 3 THE 'DANGER' GROUP
- 4 THE 'RESULT' GROUP
- 5 THE 'PROBLEM' GROUP
- 6 THE 'TRAGEDY' GROUP
- 7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ANSWER' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is written or spoken. The *that*-clause provides more information about it.

What do the people think about this? The answer is that they are happy.

In essence, the argument is that planning by the state is dangerous and ineffective.

The message is that if you want something, you have to be as aggressive as men.

The myth is that money matters are a male domain, and that many women leave the choice of pension, mortgage or life assurance to their partners. The reality is that only 3 percent of women do so.

The proposal is that, for the first time, power will be rotated between the six regions.

allegation	condition	proposal	tale
answer	explanation	rule	verdict
argument	message	rumour	word 8
charge	myth	story	
claim	news	suggestion	

2 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP

These nouns refer to beliefs and ideas. The *that*-clause provides more information about them.

The aim is that at the end of the year the monthly transfers and the bills will balance.

The consensus is that the British economy is performing remarkably well.

The expectation is that the prison will close in a year or two.

The fear is that the amount of money made available is not going to be enough.

The feeling is that these crisis talks will have to last a few more days before progress, if any, can be made.

The idea was that all the major black political groups in South Africa would be represented.

aim	fear	notion	thinking
assumption	feeling	perception	understanding
belief	hope	presumption	view
concern	idea	principle	worry
conclusion	impression	rationale	
consensus	inference	suspicion	
expectation	myth	theory	

3 THE 'DANGER' GROUP

These nouns refer to the degree of probability that something has happened or will happen.

The betting is that the family will refuse him the necessary financial information.

If you live in an old house, the chances are that there is still some lead piping.

The danger is that inflation will take off again, leaving the economy in a worse state than ever.

The odds are that, by the time of the election, inflation will be above the government's target of 2.5 percent.

betting	likelihood	risk
chances	odds	
danger	probability	

4 THE 'RESULT' GROUP

These nouns refer to results or consequences.

It is certainly true that he has never been able to say no to work so the result is that it has been ruling his life.

The upshot was that the economy grew too fast for its own good.

consequence	effect	result
corollary	outcome	upshot

5 THE 'PROBLEM' GROUP

These nouns refer to a bad aspect of a thing or situation.

The catch is that before he can hire the workers to build the housing, he has to have the housing to house the workers.

The difficulty is that scientists do not fully understand what makes volcanoes erupt.

The problem is that I like red meat in rich sauces, cream and good food. I'd rather die at 45 and enjoy myself than live on salads till I'm 65.

The trouble is that you never catch up. You are always working to pay off what you owe.

catch	disadvantage	drawback	snag
difficulty	downside	problem	trouble

6 THE 'TRAGEDY' GROUP

These nouns are used to focus on an aspect of a situation that you find, for example, sad, amusing, or surprising.

The irony is that the 30,000 unemployed fishermen are not allowed to catch a few cod for their own table.

The tragedy is that the poor will bear the costs.

irony	pity	wonder
joke	surprise	
paradox	tragedy	

7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern. All of them are abstract nouns which need the sort of definition or expansion that is provided by the that-clause.

The advantage is that you can use the machine as an ordinary TV set, with a remote control, or as a PC.

The evidence is that people can function perfectly well with one kidney and there are no long-term problems.

The fact is that the best managers do not work for money but for a sense of achievement.

The point is that we have a much more just society in this country than many other places.

The reality is that government spending has risen in real terms by 35 per cent since 1979.

I once met a man who never watched television. The reason was that he worked from 4pm to midnight, and slept till ten.

Despite some differences, the signs are that full diplomatic ties could be restored between the two countries.

The thing is that blaming anyone for what has happened doesn't really help.

advantage	implication	position	system
alternative	indications	reality	thing
deal	issue	reason	tradition
difference	key	secret	truth
evidence	plan	signs	
fact	point	situation	

Other related patterns

the N about n be that

The noun is preceded by *the* and followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *about* and a noun group or '-ing' clause. This is followed by a form of the verb *be* and a that-clause. The noun is used in the singular, or in the plural preceded by *one of the*.

the	Noun	about	noun group/-ing clause	be	that-clause
The	point	about	these programmes	is	that they are not predictable.
The	problem	about	old people	is	that they become very sensitive.
The	thing	about	dying	is	that we all do it.

Nouns are used with this pattern to focus on an aspect of something, or an issue relating to something, that you are about to mention.

The point about Edna is that she's an artist with tremendous technical understanding.

The **problem** about this, of course, is that the costs involved in employing these people are pretty horrendous.

The **thing** about boxers is that the ones at the top are extremely good athletes.

I think the **thing** about commuting is that it's a cumulative stress.

Occasionally there is a noun group after the link verb.

The **thing** about the 1980s was the optimism, the feeling that there was nothing to lose.

point	problem	thing
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The same nouns are also used in the pattern **pron be the N about n**. In this pattern the Subject is a pronoun, usually *this* or *that*, and the whole pattern is usually followed by an explanatory clause.

pronoun	be	the	Noun	about	noun group/-ing clause
That	's	the	thing	about	Shakespeare.
That	's	the	thing	about	living in your home town.

And **that's the point** about basic research: without it, you don't even know what questions to ask.

The fact is that few people did expect it, otherwise it would never have happened. **That is the point** about stock market crashes.

These nouns are sometimes used in similar patterns with an adjective:

The real exciting **point** about this project is that it's sparked off a whole new creativity.

The best **thing** about buying a raffle ticket is that you will be helping to save a life.

I think **that's the best thing** about growing up: being able to get away from an environment you hate.

the N with n be that

The noun is preceded by *the* and followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *with* and a noun group or '-ing' clause. This is followed by a form of the verb *be* and a that-clause. The noun is used in the singular, or in the plural preceded by *one of the*.

the	Noun	with	noun group/-ing clause	be	that-clause
The	difficulty	with	this approach	is	that the world is not a small place.
The	problem	with	verifying these stories	is	that there is very little evidence.

Nouns are used with this pattern to focus on an aspect of something, or an issue relating to something, that you are about to mention or have just mentioned. Most of these nouns refer to an undesirable aspect of something.

The **danger** with continually treating British Art as a law unto itself is that you end up marginalising it.

One of the **problems** with this arrangement was that he was never able to be with his friends.

The **trouble** with TV these days is that there are not enough good comedy shows, things like *Dad's Army* and *Fawlty Towers*.

danger	drawback	snag
difficulty	problem	trouble

The noun *difference* also has this pattern.

The **difference** with our lemons is that they are at least a year old when they are harvested.

The same nouns are also used in the pattern **pron be the N with n**. In this pattern the Subject is a pronoun, usually *this* or *that*, and the whole pattern is usually followed by an explanatory clause.

pronoun	be	the	Noun	with	noun group/-ing clause
This	is	the	problem	with	these elections.
That	's	the	trouble	with	living in a fantasy world.

That's the problem with Akashi. He always thinks they might be rational politicians who genuinely want to reach a deal.

What's the difference with this vaccine?

43 poss N be that

The noun is preceded by a **possessive** such as *my*, *their*, or *Susan's*, and is followed by a form of the verb *be* and a **that-clause**.

possessive	Noun	be	that-clause
Our	claim	is	that this is a discriminatory policy.
My	feeling	is	that films don't cause violence, people do.

These nouns belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ANSWER' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP
- 3 THE 'APPEAL' GROUP
- 4 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ANSWER' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is written or spoken. The that-clause provides more information about it.

My advice is that we appoint someone who will uphold the traditions of the court.

Can we manage risk better? he asks, and **his answer** is that we cannot.

His argument is that it is essential to prevent city streets becoming congested with traffic.

My complaint is that the bank does not pay interest on the interest that has been earned in previous years.

When questioned as to why he made the calls, his excuse was that he was under stress. We have heard reports that Francis has been over here but our information is that he has not left Canada.

Our message is that true Islam is humane and tolerant, it is not extremist.

My point is that I'm not going to change, however much she wants me to.

Its theme was that before you change other people you have to change yourself.

advice	contention	objection	rule
answer	excuse	point	story
argument	explanation	prayer	suggestion
case 5	information	proposal	theme
claim	instructions	recommendation	
comment	line 20	reply	
complaint	message	response	

2 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP

These nouns refer to beliefs, ideas, wishes, and thought processes. The that-clause provides more information about them.

My assumption is that my doctor is nice and kind and really cares about me.

Their attitude was that they had sent their children off to college to get an education, not to protest.

'My belief is that education in these important areas of life should start at a very early age,' he said.

Our concern was that we maintain the quality of the school overall.

Their fear is that the ship could break apart.

My guess is that the robot will look more like a human than behave like one.

His hunch was that Mr Major would surprise people by winning the debate.

He's been gone now about a month and my opinion is that the poor child's certainly dead.

His philosophy is that it is better to be right for the wrong reasons than vice versa.

My suspicion is that the inquiry goes wider and could involve other traders.

Her theory is that the foetus can sense texture, rhythms and patterns of language, even though its hearing is not fully developed.

aim	fear	opinion	sadness
analysis	feeling	perception	sense
approach	guess	perspective	suspicion
assessment	hope	philosophy	theory
assumption	hunch	policy	thesis
attitude	hypothesis	position	thinking
belief	idea	prediction	thought
bet	impression	premise	understanding
concern	instinct	presumption	view
conclusion	intention	rationale	vision
conviction	intuition	reaction	wish
dream	judgement	reason	worry
estimate	nightmare	reasoning	
expectation	observation	recollection	

3 THE 'APPEAL' GROUP

These nouns are used to talk about a good or bad characteristic that someone or

something has.

His advantage is that he is known and has worked with most of the voters.

My strength is that I have a good eye for clothes.

Our trouble is that we forgive and forget all too soon.

advantage	charm	trouble
appeal 7	disadvantage	virtue
attraction	strength	weakness

4 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern. All of them are abstract nouns which need the sort of definition or expansion that is provided by the that-clause.

My experience was that when he gave his word he tried to keep it.

His problem is that hardly anybody believes him.

difficulty	problem	situation
experience	secret	
mistake	significance	

44 the N be to-inf

The noun is preceded by *the* and is followed by a form of the verb *be* and a **to-infinitive clause**. Some nouns which can be followed directly by to-infinitive clauses, and some which cannot, can be used in this pattern. This pattern is a way of introducing and labelling the action you are going to mention.

the		Noun	be	to-infinitive clause
The		idea	is	to help people find jobs.
The		trick	is	to plan ahead.
The	easiest	way	is	to cut back on staff.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'AIM' GROUP
- 2 THE 'TRICK' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PLAN' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CHALLENGE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'EFFECT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'TEMPTATION' GROUP

1 THE 'AIM' GROUP

These nouns refer to an aim or objective.

The aim is to encourage town-dwellers to grow vegetables on small plots of land.

The idea was to make the design of the boat simple.

aim	intent	objective	purpose
goal	intention	point	
idea	object	priority	

With *aim*, *goal*, *idea*, *object*, *objective*, *point*, and *purpose*, the noun may be followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of*. This pattern is **the N of n v-link to-inf**.

*He said the **purpose** of his visit was to promote cooperation for mutual benefit.*

2 THE 'TRICK' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions that are effective or desirable.

*If she's busy playing, she'll find it hard to suck her thumb at the same time. So the **answer** is to keep her busy!*

*The **trick** is to plan ahead.*

Way is always preceded by an adjective such as *best* or *easiest*.

*The **best way** is to lower your ticket prices.*

Thing is usually preceded by an adjective such as *important* or *main*.

*The **important thing** is to make the house safe.*

answer	rule	thing
key	secret	trick
remedy	solution	way

3 THE 'PLAN' GROUP

These nouns refer to courses of action.

*We were told that the **plan** was to fly to Johannesburg on Sunday.*

alternative	plan	strategy
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4 THE 'CHALLENGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to something difficult that needs to be done or dealt with.

*The **challenge** is to harness and exploit that talent.*

challenge	problem
difficulty	task

5 THE 'EFFECT' GROUP

These nouns refer to the effect of something.

*The **effect** was to concentrate power in the hands of the central government.*

effect	result
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The noun may be followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of*.

*The **result** of the disclosures has been to rule out any prospect of political negotiations getting under way in the near future.*

6 THE 'TEMPTATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that people often do, and perhaps should not do.

*The **temptation** is to hold on to what we have achieved and to refuse to move forward.*

temptation	tendency
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45 poss N be to-inf

The noun is preceded by a **possessive** and is followed by a form of the verb *be* and a **to-infinitive clause**. Some nouns which can be followed directly by to-infinitive clauses, and some which cannot, can be used in this pattern. This pattern is a way of introducing and labelling the action you are going to mention.

possessive	Noun	be	to-infinitive clause
Our	aim	is	to educate people.
My	instinct	was	to leave at once.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'AIM' GROUP
- 2 THE 'APPROACH' GROUP
- 3 THE 'DUTY' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ADVICE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'RESPONSE' GROUP
- 6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'AIM' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's aim or objective.

*My **aim** was to discover the truth – if that were possible.*

*Her **hope** is to restore it to its original beauty.*

aim	goal	object	purpose
ambition	hope	objective	target
concern	idea	plan	vision
dream	intention	priority	wish

2 THE 'APPROACH' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's way of doing something or dealing with something.

*His **approach** was to forego all theories and hypotheses about dreams and to study the dream itself.*

*The government's **policy** was to give huge tax breaks to Amazonian settlers.*

approach	policy	strategy
method	solution	

3 THE 'DUTY' GROUP

These nouns refer to what someone or something is supposed to do.

*Our **duty** is to protect society as a whole.*

*Mrs Forsyth's **role** was to liaise with bankers and accountants.*

business	function	mission	role
duty	job	responsibility	task

4 THE 'ADVICE' GROUP

These nouns refer to what someone is told to do. In the case of *advice*, *proposal*, *suggestion*, and *tip*, the possessive indicates the person giving the advice or orders; in the case of *brief*, *instructions*, and *orders*, it indicates the person who is told what to do.

*My **advice** is to look at all the options before you buy.*

*My **orders** are to take you there myself.*

advice	orders	tip
brief	proposal	
instructions	suggestion	

5 THE 'RESPONSE' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's response to something.

*I told him a couple of rumours that I'd heard and his **response** was to roar with laughter and later tell other friends.*

impulse	instinct	response
inclination	reaction	

6 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

*Their **mistake** was to screen the advertisement during a break in children's programmes.*

*Lamont's **reward** was to be made Chancellor.*

Hope is preceded by an adjective such as *best* or *only*.

*Right now, Ubora says his **only hope** is to move his family to a better neighborhood.*

effect	mistake	tendency
hope	reward	

46 the N be -ing

The noun is preceded by *the* and is followed by a form of the verb *be* and an '-ing' clause.

the		Noun	be	-ing clause
The	only	difficulty	was	keeping track of them.
The		secret	is	knowing when to get out.

These nouns belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'TRICK' GROUP
- 2 THE 'PROBLEM' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PART' GROUP
- 4 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'TRICK' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions that are effective or desirable.

*The **trick** is finding a good manager.*

answer	secret
key	trick

2 THE 'PROBLEM' GROUP

These nouns refer to something that is difficult to do.

*The **problem** is getting local authorities to carry out their statutory duty.*

difficulty	snag
problem	trouble

3 THE 'PART' GROUP

These nouns refer to a part or aspect of something

*I suppose the **low point** would have to be falling off Superior Finish in the Grand National.*

Bit and *part* are always preceded by an adjective, and *thing* usually is. This pattern is *the adj N be -ing*.

*In your past dieting endeavours, the **easy part** was losing the weight and the **hard part** was maintaining the weight loss.*

*The **worst thing** was telling the children.*

bit	low point	thing
high point	part	turning point

4 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

*The **alternative** is closing the door to thousands of students, closing courses, and ignoring employers' needs.*

*The main **danger** is slipping in the mud as participants pick their rain-soaked way from one workshop to the next.*

alternative attraction	danger joy	mistake surprise
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47 poss N be -ing

The noun is preceded by a possessive and is followed by a form of the verb *be* and an '-ing' clause.

possessive		Noun	be	-ing clause
My	only	problem	is	having too many applicants for the job.

Three nouns with this pattern refer to an action that someone is concerned about. They are often preceded by an adjective.

*My main **concern** was getting hold of the notes from all the lectures I had missed.*

concern	fear	worry
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NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

*My **mistake** was thinking public servants couldn't be dishonest.*

*His big **strength** was motivating players out on the pitch, but the injury meant he wasn't able to do that.*

mistake	problem
pleasure	strength

48 it v-link det N that

The noun follows introductory *it*, a link verb (usually *be*), and the determiner *a* (or sometimes *no* or *little*), and is followed by a **that-clause**. The word *that* is sometimes omitted.

it	link verb	determiner		Noun	that-clause
It	is	a	total	miracle	that she is still alive.
It	is	a		myth	that older people need less sleep.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'PITY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'MIRACLE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'FALLACY' GROUP
- 4 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'PITY' GROUP

These nouns indicate that someone thinks of a situation as being bad or shocking in some way.

*It is a **disaster** that a once-thriving industry has been decimated and reduced to zero.*

*It is a national **disgrace** that standards of English have been allowed to fall.*

*'It is a **pity** that we have to meet under such tragic circumstances,' he told her.*

*It is a **scandal** that charities like ours are being left out when the Government is making so much money.*

*It is a **shame** that the world has not had a chance to see me play.*

crime 2	farce	pity	tragedy
disappointment	misfortune	scandal	travesty
disaster	mistake	shame	worry
disgrace	outrage	shock	

There is one noun, *nonsense 2*, which is used without a determiner. This pattern is it v-link N that.

*It is **nonsense** that a habit everyone knows kills people is still permitted in hospitals where the victims of smoking are treated.*

2 THE 'MIRACLE' GROUP

These nouns indicate that someone thinks of a situation as being good, usually very good indeed.

*In a way, it's a **blessing** that Michael is not alive to see what has happened.*

*It was a **miracle** that no bones were broken.*

*After the hectic pace of the election coupled with expecting a child it was a **relief** that it was all over, she said.*

blessing	fluke	miracle
comfort	marvel	relief

3 THE 'FALLACY' GROUP

These nouns indicate that something is either true or false.

*It is a common **fallacy** that quicksand will 'suck' hapless victims into its depths.*

*It is a **truism** that charming people often have something to hide – usually their total dependence on others' good opinion.*

Fact is often used with the adjectives curious, remarkable, and sad.

*It is a sad **fact** that these children, for some reason, had an obsession with fire.*

Misconception is often used with the adjectives popular and common.

*It is a popular **misconception** that cold is only dangerous for those caught on the mountainside or flung into icy water.*

fact	lie	myth	truism
fallacy	misconception	nonsense 1	truth

Nonsense is sometimes used without a determiner. This pattern is *it* v-link N that.

*It's complete **nonsense** that I was part of a conspiracy.*

4 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other abstract nouns which have this pattern.

*It is a virtual **certainty** that your bank or building society will be charging you more to borrow than it will pay you for saving.*

*It is a great **irony** that when you're at sea, there is water, water everywhere, but never a drop to cook with.*

*It is a **rule** that one must wear a school uniform.*

Secret is usually used in the phrases *it's no secret that* or *it's an open secret that*.

*It was an open **secret** that some of them owed a lot of money.*

Accident, coincidence, consolation, surprise, and wonder are also sometimes used with *no*.

*Plants and flowers are Sue's true love, so **it's no wonder** that they predominate in her home.*

Consolation, surprise, and wonder are sometimes used with *little*.

*So **it's little surprise** that goalkeeper Luca Marchegiani is seen as one of Italy's top men between the posts.*

accident	consolation	paradox	rule
certainty	irony	possibility	secret
cliché	joke	reality	surprise
coincidence	mystery	revelation	wonder

49 *it* v-link a adj N that

The noun follows introductory *it*, a link verb (usually *be*), the determiner *a*, and an adjective group, and is followed by a *that*-clause. The word *that* is sometimes omitted.

<i>it</i>	link verb	<i>a</i>	adjective group	Noun	<i>that</i> -clause
It	's	a	fair	bet	that the winners will progress to the final.

Most nouns with this pattern refer to a thought. The most common adjectives used with each noun are given in the list. *Thought* is used with a variety of adjectives.

*It is a safe **assumption** that modern terrorists are not suicidal, and will not be on board a bombed plane.*

*It is a fair **bet** that the winners will progress to the final.*

*It was a foregone **conclusion** that I would end up in the same business as my dad.*

*I think it's a good **idea** that there should be more research.*

*It is a happy **thought** that walking is still something lots of people love to spend their time doing.*

assumption (safe/fair/reasonable)	guess (fair/reasonable)	thought
bet (safe/fair)	hypothesis (reasonable)	
conclusion (foregone)	idea (good)	

NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

*It is a worldwide **phenomenon** that public land has been the primary target of squatter invasions*

*It is a fundamental **principle** that taxation is decided at Westminster, not Brussels.*

*It is a good **thing** that we met.*

phenomenon	sign
principle	thing

50 *it* v-link poss N that

The noun follows introductory *it*, a link verb (usually *be*), and a possessive, and is followed by a *that*-clause. The word *that* is sometimes omitted.

<i>it</i>	link verb	possessive	Noun	<i>that</i> -clause
It	's	my	opinion	that he saved that woman's life.
It	was	his	suggestion	that the contract should be adjusted.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP
- 2 THE 'WISH' GROUP
- 3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'BELIEF' GROUP

These nouns refer to beliefs and opinions.

*It's my **belief** that she's devoid of feelings.*

*All the airports and harbours have been alerted, but **it's my guess** that he's already skipped the country.*

*It is our **view** that this is essentially a British matter, to be resolved in Britain.*

belief	expectation	impression	theory
bet	feeling	judgement	understanding
contention	guess	opinion	view
conviction	hope	position	

2 THE 'WISH' GROUP

These nouns refer to what someone says or intends should happen.

*It was his **idea** that I join the club.*

'It has always been our wish that these things should be kept in Britain,' Asprey antiques director Charles Truman said.

decision	intention	will
idea	suggestion	wish

3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

'It's my experience that when people understand how much conservation has to do with their own daily lives they become enthusiastic,' he explains.

It's your fault that I've never made anything of my life.

experience	misfortune
fault	observation

51 it v-link det N to-inf

The noun follows introductory *it*, a link verb (usually *be*), and the determiner *a* (or sometimes *no*), and is followed by a *to*-infinitive clause.

it	link verb	determiner		Noun	to-infinitive clause
It	was	a		delight	to see him again.
It	seems	a	great	pity	to disappoint him.
It	was	an		effort	to breathe.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'RELIEF' GROUP
- 2 THE 'SHOCK' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SHAME' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CRIME' GROUP
- 5 THE 'STRUGGLE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'FALLACY' GROUP
- 7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'RELIEF' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone finds an action or experience enjoyable or pleasing in some way.

It's an honour to meet you.

It was a relief to discover that others had felt like this.

It was a great thrill to see that game.

change	honour	privilege	treat
comfort	joy	relief	
delight	pleasure	thrill	

All these nouns sometimes have a prepositional phrase beginning with *for* after them, before the *to*-infinitive clause. This pattern is *it v-link det N for n to-inf*.

It was a real privilege for us all to meet such a distinguished old British soldier.

2 THE 'SHOCK' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone finds an action or experience unpleasant in some way.

It must have been a shock to learn the truth.

disappointment	shock
nightmare	wrench

Shock and wrench are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with for. This pattern is it v-link det N for n to-inf.

I can understand that it would be a wrench for them to move away.

Shock is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with to. This pattern is it v-link det N to n to-inf.

It was a shock to me to realise during my early twenties that I was never going to be a rock star.

3 THE 'SHAME' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that an action or state is good or bad in some way.

From that point of view it's an advantage to choose a subject who isn't world-famous.

It would be a shame to demolish it.

It's a waste of time to vote.

Plan and thing are always preceded by an adjective. Idea is typically preceded by an adjective.

I think it's a bad idea to tie your self-image to your perceived success in the film business.

It is a good thing to give them toys which stimulate the imagination.

Disgrace and kindness are sometimes used with the determiner no.

It's no disgrace to come second to him.

advantage	idea	outrage	sin
crime	insult	pity	thing
disgrace	kindness	plan	tragedy
error	mistake	shame	waste (of time/worry)

Most of these nouns are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with for. This pattern is it v-link det N for n to-inf.

I still think it's a mistake for you to see this man alone.

*Insult is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with to. The noun group after to refers to a different person from the one who does the action indicated by the *to*-infinitive clause.*

Besides, it's an insult to Bill Clinton to suggest that he's going to be dominated by his wife.

4 THE 'CRIME' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that an action or state involves breaking a law or rule.

*It is an **offence** to shoot at birds from a moving vehicle.*

Crime is sometimes used with the determiner *no*.

*It's no **crime** to be poor.*

crime 1 offence sin 1

Offence is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for*. This pattern is *It v-link det N for n to-inf*.

*Under the rules, it is a criminal **offence** for anyone under 16 to buy a lottery ticket.*

5 THE 'STRUGGLE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something is difficult or easy.

*It's a tremendous **challenge** to try and face both of those issues at the same time, but we can do it.*

*It was sometimes a **struggle** to get out of bed in the morning.*

Decision, matter, and task are always preceded by an adjective.

*It was a tough **decision** to leave Brett Robinson out of the team.*

*It would then be a simple **matter** to identify which asteroids are likely to hit the Earth, and when.*

Matter and problem are sometimes used with the determiner *no*.

*It was no **problem** to figure out that Mr Grayson was, in fact, Oliver Hazard Perry Weston.*

battle effort nightmare task
challenge job problem
decision matter struggle

Challenge, decision, effort, matter, problem, and struggle are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for*. This pattern is *It v-link det N for n to-inf*.

*It was an **effort** for him to talk.*

6 THE 'FALLACY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that an idea or statement is incorrect.

*It is, of course, a **fallacy** to believe that the more time you spend on something the better the results.*

Exaggeration, lie, and understatement are sometimes used with the determiner *no*.

*It's no **exaggeration** to say that the future of humanity depends on it.*

delusion exaggeration illusion mistake
error fallacy lie understatement

7. NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

*It was a **risk** to play him against Auxerre.*

*On New Year's Day, it's a **tradition** to give children envelopes filled with money to buy toys.*

Exercise, experience, feeling, sight, and thing are always preceded by an adjective.

*It is an unforgettable **experience** to live and study in the intellectual atmosphere of Heidelberg.*

*It was a fantastic **feeling** to win our third national title.*

Surprise is sometimes used with the determiner *no*.

*It was no **surprise** to find that he now administers a large school system up in Michigan.*

achievement feeling risk thing
exercise priority sight tradition
experience responsibility surprise

52 it v-link N to-inf

The noun follows introductory *it* and a link verb (usually *be*), and is followed by a to-infinitive clause.

it	link verb	Noun	to-infinitive clause
It	was	madness	to send us here.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FOLLY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'GOOD PRACTICE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'FUN' GROUP

1 THE 'FOLLY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that an action or state is bad or wrong in some way.

*It is **bad manners** to complain about food.*

*It would be **folly** to assume that this type of relationship is unique.*

*It is still **heresy** to question the party's basic claim to control every lever of political power.*

*It's **rubbish** to say he drinks a lot.*

arrogance bad practice lunacy rubbish
bad etiquette folly madness treason
bad manners heresy nonsense

Arrogance, folly, madness, and nonsense are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for*. This pattern is *It v-link N for n to-inf*.

*He thinks it's **nonsense** for the government to claim this as a return to democracy.*

2 THE 'GOOD PRACTICE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that an action or state is good in some way.

It is etiquette to talk to the person on your right and left equally.

It's good practice to interview several attorneys before you make a final choice.

etiquette	good practice
good manners	policy

Practice is also sometimes preceded by adjectives such as *common*, *standard*, and *normal*. When used like this, it is often followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for*.

It was common practice to lock children in at nights to prevent escape.

He said it was normal practice for an owner to bring a property up to a respectable standard before renting it out.

3 THE 'FUN' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that an action or state is enjoyable.

I think it would be fun to run a newspaper.

bliss	fun
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53 it v-link poss N to-inf

The noun follows introductory *it*, a link verb (usually *be*), and a *possessive*, and is followed by a *to-infinitive clause*.

It	link verb	possessive	Noun	to-infinitive clause
It	is	my	goal	to sign him.
It	's	our	job	to protect them.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'AIM' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DUTY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CUSTOM' GROUP
- 4 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP
- 5 THE 'FATE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'DECISION' GROUP
- 7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'AIM' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate what someone wants to do.

It is our aim to produce a magazine the fans want, so drop me a line outlining any suggestions you might have.

It's every player's ambition to play for their country at the highest level.

It was not my intention to insult the president.

aim	dream	intention	policy
ambition	goal	objective	priority
desire	hope	plan	wish

2 THE 'DUTY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate what someone is supposed to do.

It is my duty to see that this young person has a fair and unprejudiced trial.

It's the United States' role to minimize those risks.

business	job	responsibility
duty	mission	role
function	obligation	task

3 THE 'CUSTOM' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate what someone usually does.

It is our custom to cremate our dead.

custom	habit	practice
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Custom and practice also have the pattern *it v-link the N to-inf*. *Fashion* and *norm* have this pattern too.

In some countries it is the practice to underline the name of the town to make it stand out on an envelope.

4 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate what someone is able or allowed to do.

He insists that it is his right to walk on any street, any time.

Place is usually used with a negative.

It's not my place to say what she can and can't do.

place	prerogative	privilege	right
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5 THE 'FATE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate what happens to someone or something.

'I really felt it wasn't my fate to fall in love with somebody,' she says.

destiny	fate
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6 THE 'DECISION' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate who made a decision or suggestion.

It was my decision to go.

choice	decision	idea
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7 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are two other nouns which have this pattern.

'I'll bet you hated them, didn't you?' 'It's not my nature to hate people.'
It has been our pleasure to serve you.

nature pleasure

54 *it v N to-inf*

The noun follows introductory *it* and a verb, and is followed by a **to-infinitive clause**. The noun may be preceded by a determiner such as *some*, a phrase such as *a lot of*, or adjective such as *great*.

it	verb group		Noun	to-infinitive clause
It	takes		nerve	to be that single-minded.
It	took	considerable	skill	to do this.

The verb is usually *take*, but *need* and *require* occasionally also have this pattern.

Most nouns with this pattern refer to qualities needed to do something. This is productive use: other nouns referring to qualities occasionally have this pattern.

It will take courage to take on so tough a job.

It took all of her energy to lift it, while Chiku watched, uncomprehending.

balls	dedication	faith	patience
bravery	effort	guts	skill
confidence	energy	imagination	strength
courage	experience	nerve	

NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are three other nouns which have this pattern. *Good* and *harm* are used with the verb *do* and the determiner *no*.

'It does no good to keep silent,' he went on.

It will do no harm to wait a while.

Practice is used with the verb *take*.

It takes considerable practice to master this technique but it is a skill well worth acquiring

good harm practice

Productive use

This pattern is also used to indicate the amount of money or time needed to do something. Any noun group referring to an amount of money or a period of time can be used after the verb (*cost* or *take*).

It takes ages to get repairs done.

Although it cost a fortune to send men to the moon, it made good sense to me at the time.

It takes a long time to develop these technologies.

It takes a lot of money to decorate hospital wards at Christmas.

Alternatively, with *take*, the person or thing doing the action may be referred to with a prepositional phrase beginning with *for* which comes between the noun and the to-infinitive clause. This pattern is *it v N for n to-inf*.

It may take a few days for the medicine to become effective.

55 *it v n N to-inf*

The noun follows introductory *it*, a verb, and a noun group, and is followed by a **to-infinitive clause**. There is sometimes a determiner or adjective before the noun.

it	verb group	noun group		Noun	to-infinitive clause
It	gave	him	no	pleasure	to win.
It	will do	Bernard		good	to relax.

There are two verbs which frequently occur with this pattern, *give* and *do*.

Give is used with nouns referring to feelings. The nouns that most frequently have this pattern with *give* are:

buzz 6 pleasure thrill
feeling satisfaction

Buzz, *feeling*, and *thrill* are used with the determiner *a*. *Pleasure* and *satisfaction* are used without a determiner, or with a determiner such as *much* or *no*, or an adjective such as *great*.

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that you have been chosen to receive a Special Cash Award.

It gives them a thrill to play for their local club.

Feeling is always preceded by an adjective.

It gave him a strange feeling to know that he had at last found the place.

Do is used with *good* and *harm*.

It'd do us good to get away for a while.

Harm is always used with the determiner *no*.

It will do the child no harm to stay alone in bed and to cry for attention.

Productive use

This pattern is also used to indicate the amount of money or time needed to do something. Any noun group referring to an amount of money or a period of time can be used after the verb (*cost* or *take*).

It cost us two million pounds to buy that site.

It took me a long time to get better.

56 it v-link det N -ing

The noun follows introductory *it*, a link verb (usually *be*), and the determiner *a* (or sometimes *no*), and is followed by an '-ing' clause.

it	link verb	determiner		Noun	-ing clause
It	's	a		pleasure	talking to you.
It	was	a	real	problem	holding him back.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'PLEASURE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'PAIN' GROUP
- 3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'PLEASURE' GROUP

These nouns indicate that something is pleasant or easy.

It was a comfort knowing you were there.

It's a pleasure doing business with Harry because he is such an old charmer.

So it was a great relief knowing that it wasn't just me.

Joke is usually used with the determiner *no*.

It's no joke being pregnant.

boost	doddle	hoot	4	pleasure
comfort	dream	joke		relief
delight	honour	joy		thrill

2 THE 'PAIN' GROUP

These nouns indicate that something is unpleasant or difficult.

He is obviously enjoying it enormously though he says it is a bore having to go abroad so much.

All agreed that it was a nightmare trying to make her talk.

It's a pain trying them on, finding styles and sizes that are right for me.

It's a strain being in the wrong job.

Problem is often used with the determiner *no*.

It's no problem asking someone out, men find it exciting.

bitch	challenge	nuisance	slog
blow	chore	pity	strain
bore	disappointment	problem	struggle
bugger	fag	shame	task
burden	nightmare	shock	wrench

3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

In other ways it's an advantage being young because your body recovers quicker.

He said yesterday: 'It was a big gamble leaving 'EastEnders' but it has really paid off.'
It was a mistake getting married to Keith so young.

achievement	disadvantage	mistake
advantage	experience	revelation
bonus	gamble	risk

57 it v-link N -ing

The noun follows introductory *it* and a link verb (usually *be*), and is followed by an '-ing' clause.

it	link verb		Noun	-ing clause
It	must be	great	fun	being a top fashion designer.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FUN' GROUP
- 2 THE 'HELL' GROUP

1 THE 'FUN' GROUP

These nouns indicate that something is pleasant.

It was bliss working in the area as it meant we did not have to travel far from home.

It was fun seeing you.

Fun is often used with the determiner *no*.

It's no fun waking up every morning realising you're a target – a marked man.

bliss	fun
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2 THE 'HELL' GROUP

These nouns indicate that something is unpleasant or difficult.

It's hard work being a professional comedian.

It must have been hell working out whether she could give her boys a better life on her own.

hard work	hell	murder
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58 v it det N to-inf

The noun is preceded by a verb, *it*, and a determiner, and is followed by a *to*-infinitive clause.

	verb group	it	determiner	Noun	to-infinitive clause
I	made	it	my	mission	to track him down.
I	consider	it	a	privilege	to have been there.

The verb is either *make*, or a verb indicating that someone has a particular opinion, usually *consider*, *feel*, *find*, or *think*. *Call*, *count*, and *deem* occasionally have this pattern.

This pattern is productive: many nouns have it occasionally, but only a few have it frequently.

The nouns that most frequently have this pattern with *make* are:

business	habit	pleasure	rule
crime	job	policy	
felony	mission	practice	
goal	offence	priority	

He'll make it his business to find out about you.

They have strict laws that make it a crime to reveal information about someone who has an account in a Panamanian bank.

The regime has made it a priority to build roads, schools and clinics in rural areas, where its support is strong.

The nouns that most frequently have this pattern with opinion verbs are:

challenge	privilege
duty	struggle

My father was part of a generation of young men who felt it their duty to fight for the freedom of their land.

Many families now find it a struggle to provide the security and stability children need.

59 v it as det N to-inf

The noun is preceded by a verb, *it*, the preposition *as*, and a determiner (usually a possessive), and is followed by a to-infinitive clause.

	verb group	it	as	determiner	Noun	to-infinitive clause
I	see	it	as	my	role	to rectify that imbalance.

The verb is usually *see* or *regard*.

Nouns with this pattern refer to a duty or task.

He saw it as his duty to safeguard the lives of the men under his command.

Bill regards it as his mission to maximise the enjoyment of drinking beer.

duty	responsibility	task
job	right	
mission	role	

60 *there be det N about n*

The noun comes after *there*, the verb *be*, and a determiner (usually *a*), and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *about* and a noun group. This pattern is productive: the nouns listed below give an idea of the kind of nouns that have it.

there	be	determiner		N	about	noun group
There	is	a		fascination	about	map-making.
There	was	a	solid	look	about	them.

Nouns with this pattern refer to qualities. There is often an adjective before the noun, or some other words that describe the quality further.

There's a buzz about the town, but they've got no tradition.

Sufferers from hay fever will no doubt feel that there is an inevitability about the arrival of their symptoms with the spring and summer.

There was a terrible sadness about their plight that could be appreciated even by those who deplored their affiliations.

With *feel*, *feeling*, *look*, and *quality*, there is usually an adjective before the noun.

There is a slightly surreal feel about the book.

There was an elusive quality about Robert that only served to strengthen my attraction to him.

Element and sense are always followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of*.

There was an element of irony about what was happening.

There's a sense of urgency about this presidential election, an urgency brought about by difficult economic times.

Air and aura are always preceded by an adjective or followed by *of*.

There was a theatrical air about the whole scene.

Throughout the last round there was an air of confidence about him, a bounce in his walk, an eagerness that never became impatience.

air 5	detachment	freshness	loneliness
alertness	determination	gentleness	look 2.2
ambiguity	elegance	glamour	magic
aura	element	grace	menace
beauty	emptiness	grandeur	mystique
buzz	energy	honesty	neatness
calmness	excitement	humour	openness
charm	familiarity	inevitability	ordinariness
circularity	fascination	informality	passion
clarity	feel	innocence	peace
coldness	feeling 12	intensity	poignancy
confidence	fragility	irony	predictability
coolness	freedom	logic	profundity

purity	sense	stillness	urgency
quality	serenity	strength	vagueness
quietness	seriousness	sweetness	vulnerability
radiance	sharpness	symmetry	warmth
restlessness	simplicity	timelessness	
sadness	sincerity	toughness	
sameness	softness	unreality	

Productive use

Note that some nouns which have the pattern **N about n** are sometimes used with *there*, as in *There was some doubt about when the statement was made* and *There was considerable argument about me staying on tomorrow*.

61 there be det N in n/-ing

The noun comes after *there*, the verb *be*, and a determiner, and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *in* and a noun group or an '-ing' clause.

there	be	determiner	Noun	in	noun group/-ing clause
There	's	no	point	in	worrying about it.

Three of the nouns with this pattern are used when saying how useful or sensible something is.

There was no political mileage in it so they ducked the issue.

There is little point in continuing treatment for more than six months.

There was no sense in arguing.

mileage 3 point 4 sense 8

There is also one noun, *truth*, which is used when saying how true something is.

Is there any truth in the rumour that Alan Ball is about to make a bid for a Scunthorpe player?

62 there be det N to n/-ing

The noun comes after *there*, the verb *be*, and a determiner, and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *to* and a noun group or an '-ing' clause.

there	be	determiner	Noun	to	noun group/-ing clause
There	's	a	symbolic	aspect	to Mr Bush's journey.
There	is	a		pattern	to history.
There	was	no		purpose	to my life.

Most nouns with this pattern refer to a feature or quality that something has.

There was an unpleasant edge to her voice now.

Yet there is a logic to the appointment.

There is no point to deception unless there is a need for it.

Appeal, aspect, dimension, feel, flavour, quality, side, and strand always have an adjective, a determiner such as *another*, or a number before them.

I know this territory, it is mine, but tonight there's an alien quality to the land which frightens me.

There is another side to this whole matter.

There are three strands to this argument.

Element always has one of the modifiers mentioned above, or is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of*.

Mr Sheather conceded that there might be an element of truth to that theory.

This time the government is emphasising that there is no political element to the trouble.

appeal 7	element	pattern 1	ring 6
aspect	feel	point 4	side
dimension	flavour 1,4	purpose	strand 2
edge 7	logic	quality	symmetry

There are also two nouns which refer to the skill needed to do something.

There's an art to playing festivals and, as someone pointed out to me, it's obviously all about drama.

art knack

Productive uses

This is a productive pattern: any noun referring to a quality can be used with this pattern when preceded by the adjective *certain*, as in *There's a certain beauty to scientific discovery*.

Note that some nouns which have the pattern **N to n** are sometimes used with *there*, as in *There is a downside to working in the theatre* and *There is a postscript to this story*.

63 at N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *at*. Sometimes the noun group has no determiner, as in *at school*. Sometimes it has, as in *at the party*.

at	Noun group
at	the hospital
at	lunchtime
at	risk

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'SCHOOL' GROUP
- 2 THE 'TOP' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CONTROLS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'PARTY' GROUP

- 5 THE 'LUNCH' GROUP
- 6 THE 'TIME' GROUP
- 7 THE 'JUNCTURE' GROUP
- 8 THE 'PEAK' GROUP
- 9 THE 'PRICE' GROUP
- 10 THE 'PACE' GROUP
- 11 THE 'PEACE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'WAR' GROUP
- 13 THE 'GUNPOINT' GROUP
- 14 THE 'ROOT' GROUP
- 15 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP
- 16 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'SCHOOL' GROUP

These nouns refer to places or institutions.

He was met **at the airport** by his host the Chinese deputy foreign minister.

His wife Jennifer is **at his bedside**.

I'm **at Mark's house**.

We had dinner **at a restaurant**, The Doric, in Attleborough.

When I was **at school** I was really into sport.

Fred's naval officer father was lost **at sea** before his birth.

at camp	at court 1,4	at nursery	at table
at church	at home 1,2,11	at school	at university
at college	at kindergarten	at sea	at work 6

at the airport	at the Department of ...	at the station
at the bar 3	at the graveside (of...)	at the supermarket
at the cinema	at the scene 4	

at his bedside	at his home 1
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The following are used as normal count nouns. This use is productive: any noun which refers to a place or institution can be used in this way. This list contains the most frequent.

bar 1	desk	office	stadium
camp	flat	police station	table
checkpoint	hospital	pub	university
church	hotel	restaurant	village
club	house	school	
college	nursery	service station	

2 THE 'TOP' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate position.

In bad weather a pilot will normally have to decide **at an altitude** of 200ft whether it is safe to land.

Hold the pan **at an angle** so that the egg spreads out in a thin film across the bottom.

There is another door **at the back**.

I've never heard of anyone escaping from a submarine **at a depth** greater than that.

The wine waiter was hovering **at his elbow**.

Keep a supply of liquid close **at hand** so that you can keep drinking it.

You will find us **at the junction** of King Street and Osbourne Street next to the studios.

Stand with your arms bent **at right angles** and your elbows at your sides.

They paused **at the top** of the stairs, doubtful as to which way to go next.

at arm's length	at close range	at right angles
at close quarters	at hand	

at the back (of...)	at the corner (of...)	at the front (of...)	at the rear (of...)
at the base (of...)	at the edge (of...)	at the head (of...)	at the right (of...)
at the bottom (of...)	at the end (of...)	at the left (of...)	at the side (of...)
at the centre (of...)	at the foot (of...)	at the margin (of...)	at the top (of...)

at an angle	at a distance	at a junction
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at my elbow	at my heels	at my side
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at ... altitude/at an altitude ...	at ... height/at a height ...
at ... angle/at an angle ...	at ... junction/at the junction ...
at ... depth/at a depth ...	at ... range/at a range ...
at ... distance/at a distance ...	

3 THE 'CONTROLS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the controls of a plane, boat, or vehicle. They are used when indicating who is controlling or steering it.

As we flew on to Athara, I was **at the controls**, Jack navigating.

at the controls	at the tiller	at the wheel
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4 THE 'PARTY' GROUP

These nouns refer to events.

I was not **at the meeting** so I couldn't defend myself.

I do cry **at the movies** - I'm a very sensitive person.

They met **at a party** in 1968 when she was Fashion Editor of Queen magazine.

I was best man **at his wedding**, and we see a great deal of each other.

at the movies	at the races
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The following are used as normal count nouns.

ball	dinner party	meeting	summit
banquet	festival	news conference	talks
barbecue	funeral	party	trial
ceremony	hearing	press conference	wedding
concert	match	rally	
conference	matinee	reception	

5 THE 'LUNCH' GROUP

These nouns refer to meals. With all these nouns except *meal*, the noun group does not usually begin with a determiner.

The atmosphere **at lunch** was relaxed.

The hospitals provide a choice of healthy dishes **at every meal**.

Lunch and dinner are sometimes used with a determiner when they refer to a formal social event.

At a **dinner** held in his honour by President Vo Chi Cong, Mr Suharto said the settlement would open a new chapter in the history of South East Asia.

at breakfast at lunch at tea
at dinner at supper

This is used as a normal count noun.

meal

6 THE 'TIME' GROUP

These nouns refer to times.

The survey, taken **at the beginning** of this month, showed that 90 per cent expect Labour to form the next government.

At **Christmas** the shops are decorated exquisitely.

They wrote her a formal letter, asking her to call at the sheriff's office **at her convenience**.

The players get up **at dawn** to train five times a week.

At **that instant** the museum was plunged into total darkness.

He went home for a sandwich **at lunchtime**.

A major war, he warned, could break out **at any moment**.

When you go out **at night**, close the curtains and leave a light on.

At the **time** of his death he was working on 'Hot Photography', a book about film and cameras in tropical climates.

He says he'll come back **at the weekend**.

at bedtime	at dusk	at low tide	at present
at birth	at Easter	at lunchtime	at rush hour
at Christmas	at evensong	at mealtime (usu plural)	at suppertime
at dawn	at first light	at night	at teatime
at daybreak	at half-term	at night-time	at twilight
at dead of night	at high tide	at peak time	at weekends
at dinnertime	at intervals	at playtime	

at the crack of dawn at the outset
at the dead of night at the weekend

at the beginning of ... at the end of ...
at the conclusion of ... at the start of ...

at my convenience

at ... age/at the age ... at ... minute
at ... date /at a date ... at ... moment/at the moment ...
at ... hour/at an hour ... at ... point/at the point ...
at ... instant/at the instant ... at ... time/at a/the time ...

7 THE 'JUNCTURE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a point or stage in something.

Tony Blair has warned that the monarchy is **at a crossroads**.

Mountjoy's defeat means that eight of the world's top 16 players have fallen **at the first hurdle**.

I feel there is a small point I should raise **at this juncture**.

at the eleventh hour at the first hurdle

at a crossroads 2

at ... juncture at ... point at ... stage

8 THE 'PEAK' GROUP

These nouns refer to the highest level or greatest intensity that something reaches.

Is interest in the Internet really **at fever pitch** or is this obsession with electronic information merely a media creation?

In the early 1980s, when unemployment was **at its height**, few teenagers here could be too choosy about jobs.

Gardner, 36, quit boxing **at the peak** of his career in 1981 after winning the European and Commonwealth titles.

at fever pitch

at its height/at the height of ... at its zenith/at the zenith of ...
at its peak/at the peak of ...

9 THE 'PRICE' GROUP

These nouns refer to prices or costs.

The firm also sells vitamins, beauty aids, and other drugstore goods **at a discount**.

The 1990 edition is still available **at half-price**.

This is a typical Berlin restaurant serving excellent food **at reasonable prices**.

at cost price at half-price

at a discount at a premium at a profit

These nouns are usually used with words that make the meaning more specific.

at ... cost/at a cost ... at ... interest/at interest of ...
at ... expense at ... price

10 THE 'PACE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the pace at which something moves or changes.

They were expected to move everywhere at the double.

Some firms have kept production lines running at full tilt as they work through a backlog of contracts.

You may have to cut down on activities and go at a slower pace.

The trains can run at speeds of up to 90 mph.

He set off up the road at a trot.

at full stretch 16 at full tilt 7
at full throttle 6 at speed

at the double 13

at a gallop at a trot

at a ... clip 11 at ... rate/at a rate ...
at ... pace/at a pace ... at ... speed/at a speed ...

11 THE 'PEACE' GROUP

These nouns refer to states.

She felt at a disadvantage because she was not a trained nurse.

We intend to fight the application of this law with every means at our disposal.

I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to reveal the answer.

This policy puts the worker at the mercy of the employer.

I think you will not be at peace until you have faced up to this.

What is at stake here is not just the governorship of Yucatan, but the future of Mexico.

at ease at peace at stake
at liberty (to do something) at risk 8 at work 32,33

at a disadvantage at a loss 9
at an end at a standstill

at your disposal/at the disposal of ... at your mercy/at the mercy of ...
at your ease at your service 22

12 THE 'WAR' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that two or more people, groups, or things are in opposition to each other. These are **reciprocal nouns**; they are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *with*.

When Reagan was in the White House, few minded that so many of his statements were at variance with the facts.

England was at war.

at cross-purposes (with ...) at odds (with ...) at war (with ...)
at loggerheads (with ...) at variance (with ...)

13 THE 'GUNPOINT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate what weapon someone is threatened with.

The man burst into the club and forced people downstairs at gunpoint.

at bayonet point at gunpoint at knifepoint

14 THE 'ROOT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the basic cause or nature of something.

At the bottom of all our efforts to change someone else is a basically selfish motive.

Fear of each other lies at the root of our problems.

at the bottom 13 of ... at the heart 5 of ...
at the core 4 of ... at the root 7 of ...

15 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that someone wants a particular thing to happen, or expresses their wishes.

It was only after three weeks, at the insistence of the family doctor, that the damaged leg was X-rayed and the fracture discovered.

Two of the dogs were later destroyed at the owner's request.

The collapse in the power of trade unions has left managers free to hire and fire pretty much at will.

at whim at will

Foot sometimes has this pattern, but it has the pattern **on N** much more frequently. See Section 69, meaning group 3.

(ii) The 'air', 'land', and 'sea' group

These nouns are used to indicate whether people travel, or things are transported, through the air, across land, or over water. *Canal, river, and road* are count nouns.

*'I have to travel **by air** a great deal and I hate it,' she says.*

*Also under consideration are measures to stop the flow of essential goods into the republics **by land**.*

*It is accessible **by road** only in the winter.*

*As so often on such visits, he arrived **by sea**, on the battle-cruiser Galicia.*

by air	by river	by water
by canal	by road	
by land	by sea	

(iii) The 'rail' group

These nouns refer to railway systems. All of these nouns except *rail* are singular nouns.

*It is unspoilt, yet only an hour from London **by rail**.*

*Take our advice: park elsewhere and go **by tube**!*

by funicular	by rail	by underground 2
by metro	by subway	
by monorail	by tube 4	

2 THE 'MAIL' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of sending messages or information. All these nouns except *airmail, telex, and word of mouth* are count nouns or singular nouns.

*In all cases, owners of affected vehicles will be notified **by mail**.*

*He tried to contact her husband **by phone** but could not reach him.*

*Most have heard about the place **by word of mouth**.*

by airmail	by mail	by post	by telephone
by e-mail	by messenger	by radio	by telex
by fax	by modem	by satellite	by word of mouth
by letter	by phone	by telegram	

3 THE 'CHEQUE' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of paying for something. All these nouns except *cash* and *plastic* are count nouns.

*Did Mrs Vail pay you **by cheque** or **by cash**?*

*You can then pay directly **by credit card** or post your payment to us.*

by cash	by credit card	by plastic 3
by cheque	by credit transfer	by standing order
by covenant	by instalments	by subscription

by ... draft 6

4 THE 'MACHINE' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that are used to do or make something. All these nouns except *radar* and *remote control* are count nouns.

*The whole process is controlled **by computer**.*

*Are they picked **by hand** or are they picked **by machine** nowadays?*

by computer	by hand	by radar
by crane	by machine	by remote control

5 THE 'FORCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of achieving something.

*If you'll not sell it, we are going to take it **by force**.*

*He said he was sure the crisis could be solved **by negotiation**.*

*Television is the most important medium of our lives, and I believe we can use it to educate **by stealth**.*

by deception	by magic	by stealth	by trial and error
by diplomacy	by mediation	by subterfuge	
by force	by negotiation	by touch	

Note that the more usual way of referring to a way of achieving something is to use *by* followed by the '-ing' form of a verb, as in *by negotiating with the rebel leaders*. Most verbs can be used like this.

6 THE 'BALLOT' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of selecting a person or thing, or deciding something. All these nouns except *acclamation, lot, and merit* are count nouns.

*The membership has elected them **by ballot** and they are entitled to make decisions.*

*There will be no selection either **by examination** or **by interview** under a Labour government.*

*In the event of a tie, the matter shall be decided **by lot**.*

by acclamation	by interview	by majority vote
by ballot	by lot	by merit
by examination	by lottery	by referendum

7 THE 'AUCTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of selling something.

*It's going to be sold **by auction** next month.*

by auction	by mail order	by tender
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8 THE 'ROTE' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of learning. We include here *by heart*, which indicates how well someone learns something.

*He'd learnt **by experience** not to tell Parslow things he wouldn't want to know.*

She seemed to know the whole poem **by heart**.
It says medical schools place too much emphasis on learning **by rote**.

by experience	by heart 17	by osmosis 2
by experiment	by imitation	by rote

9 THE 'INJECTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to physical processes.

Some hospitals still give vitamin K **by injection**.
Water enters root hairs from the soil **by osmosis**.

by ingestion	by injection	by photosynthesis
by inhalation	by osmosis 1	by suction

10 THE 'DROWNING' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of dying or being killed. *Accident* and *firing squad* are count nouns.

Her postmortem indicated death **by drowning** under the influence of drugs.
The former President and at least a dozen of his ministers were executed **by firing squad**.

by accident 1,2	by fire	by lethal injection	by stoning
by cancer	by firing squad	by misadventure	by strangulation
by crucifixion	by hanging	by natural causes	by suffocation
by drowning	by heart attack	by poisoning	by suicide
by electrocution	by lethal gas	by starvation	

11 THE 'CHANCE' AND 'DESIGN' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate whether something that happened was intended or not. *Appointment*, *arrangement*, and *mistake* are count nouns.

It was only **by chance** that we found out there were three or four other people there.
Whether **by design** or **by accident** his timing was perfect.
The boy had let off a fire extinguisher in the house **by mistake**.

by accident 3	by choice	by fluke	by mistake
by appointment	by coincidence	by good fortune	by necessity
by arrangement	by default	by happenstance	
by chance	by design	by luck	

12 THE 'NATURE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate why, or in what respect, someone or something is what they are. We include here *reputation*, which indicates that a person or thing is thought to be something, and *definition*, which indicates that a person or thing must be something because of the way they are described. *Definition*, *profession*, *reputation*, and *trade* are count nouns. *Nature* is a singular noun.

Youngsters are conservative **by nature** and can take a dim view of a new teacher suddenly turning up.

A lawyer **by profession**, he came to national prominence as the Secretary General of the National Union of Mineworkers.

She was **by reputation** a good organiser and committee person.

by adoption	by definition	by nature	by trade
by birth 3	by inclination	by profession	by tradition
by blood 2	by instinct	by reputation	by training
by conviction	by marriage	by temperament	

13 THE 'LAW' GROUP

These nouns refer to laws or customs. *Act of Parliament*, *law*, and *statute* are count nouns.

By convention peers do not vote down legislation proposed in the governing party's manifesto.

By law, the committee must be consulted on all principal social security changes.

by Act of Parliament	by custom	by statute
by convention	by law	by tradition

14 THE 'DECREE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the way that someone rules or governs. All these nouns except *consensus*, *consent*, and *terror* are count nouns.

The sources pointed out that the new government is keen to run the government **by consensus**.
He has declared he wants to rule **by decree**.

by consensus	by decree	by edict	by fiat
by consent	by diktat	by example	by terror

15 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that someone is allowed, asked, or told to do something.

Entry is **by invitation** only.

Copies are available **by request** from the address or phone number on the front of your bill.

Courtesy, order, and permission are followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of*.

Cafes and restaurants are all closed **by order of the authorities**.

Agreement is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *with*.

By agreement with Parliament, the income from the Crown Estate goes straight to the Treasury.

by agreement (with ...)	by courtesy of ...	by permission of ...
by consent	by invitation	by request
by contract	by order of ...	by ticket

16 THE 'CANDLELIGHT' GROUP

These nouns refer to light from particular things.

If you want to dine **by candlelight** under the Caribbean sky, the Piperade restaurant at Glitter Bay is perfect.

I used to read **by torchlight**.

by candlelight by flashlight by lamplight by the light of the moon
by daylight by floodlight by moonlight by torchlight

17 THE 'COMPARISON' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of comparing one thing with another, referring to something, or using something as the basis of an idea or statement.

*The institute says that microwave welding will have an energy efficiency of about 60 per cent. **By comparison**, laser welding, for example, can have an energy efficiency of as low as 10 per cent.*

*All these were the necessary and outward signs of progress and, **by extension**, America's preeminence in the world.*

*Now, so far the United States has managed to secure UN endorsement for the steps it has taken, including **by implication** the military build-up.*

Reference is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*.

*The action may then be explained **by reference** to the state of mind that produced it.*

by analogy by extension by reference to ...
by comparison by implication
by contrast by inference

18 THE 'BUCKETFUL' GROUP

These nouns refer to an amount of people or things, usually a large amount. The noun group begins with the determiner *the*.

This use is productive: many nouns that refer to a container can be combined with *-ful* and used in this pattern, and many nouns that refer to a form of transport can be combined with *-load* and used in this pattern. We list below the most frequent:

*They gathered apples, stored them on wooden shelves in the first of the stone houses of the farmyard, and sold them **by the bucketful**.*

*My father used to buy drugs **by the truckload**.*

by the armful by the busload by the handful by the sackful
by the bucketful by the fistful by the lorryload by the truckload

19 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern. All these nouns except *instinct* and *proxy* are count nouns.

*Some were judged guilty **by association** – being friends, relatives or flatmates of those who were involved.*

*He never mentions her **by name**.*

*If you decide to vote **by proxy** you must find someone suitable to vote at your polling station on your behalf.*

by association by committee by name
by Caesarean by instinct by proxy

Other productive uses

1 A prepositional phrase beginning with *by* is used to refer to the person or thing that does or produces something, as in *Unhappiness is caused **by selfishness** or books **by women***. The noun group may begin with a determiner, as in *decisions made **by their predecessors***.

2 A prepositional phrase beginning with *by* is used to refer to the date, time, or age by which something is done, as in *he had had 12 children **by the age of 44***. The noun group begins with the determiner *the*.

3 A prepositional phrase beginning with *by* is used to refer to the quantity which counts as a unit for buying and selling, as in *At Billingsgate, lobsters are sold **by the pound**, crabs **by the stone**, oysters **by the 100**, Dublin Bay prawns **by the gallon**, scallops **by the dozen**, winkles **by the hundredweight**, mussels **by the 25 kg** and prawns **by the box***. The noun group begins with the determiner *the*.

4 Many nouns not listed above but which have meanings similar to those mentioned are sometimes found in the pattern *by N*. For example, most nouns referring to a form of transport can be used with this pattern, as in *by raft*.

65 from N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *from*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In some cases, there is no determiner.

from	Noun group
from	birth
from	the outset
from	their standpoint

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'VIEWPOINT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'START' GROUP
- 3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'VIEWPOINT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a particular viewpoint. They are used with a *possessive*, or with other words that make the meaning more specific.

*As the tour went on, Margaret found herself viewing her career **from a different perspective**. It makes no sense and, **from my viewpoint**, it all looks like people trying to justify their positions.*

from my/a ... **angle**
 from my/a ... **perspective**
 from my/a ... **point of view**
 from my/a ... **standpoint**
 from my/a ... **vantage point**
 from my/a ... **viewpoint**

2 THE 'START' GROUP

These nouns refer to a time at the start of something.

*I had been interested in hairdressing **from the age of 13 or 14**, though I'd never seen it as a career.*

*I've been blind in my right eye **from birth**.*

*Stuart Proffitt has been an enthusiastic supporter of the project **from its inception**.*

***From that moment**, his life became a nightmare.*

*In many ways the marriage was doomed **from the start**.*

from birth **from childhood** **from infancy**

from the age of ... **from the first** **from the start**
from the beginning **from the outset**

from its inception

from that moment

3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are two other nouns which have this pattern.

*I know **from experience** how difficult it is.*

*I imagine he drew the map **from memory**.*

from experience **from memory**

Productive uses

This pattern can be used when indicating where someone or something comes from, as in *She's **from London***; where someone is when they see something, as in *from a distance*; or what place someone leaves, as in *He's just been released **from prison***.

Other related patterns

from N to N

The first noun group comes after the preposition *from*, and is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*. In each case, only one or two noun groups are found after *to*: these are phrases.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

1 THE 'HEAD TO FOOT' GROUP

- 2 THE 'BEGINNING TO END' GROUP
- 3 THE 'RAGS TO RICHES' GROUP

1 THE 'HEAD TO FOOT' GROUP

These nouns are used when emphasizing that the whole of something is involved or affected.

*She was trembling **from head to foot**.*

from end to end **from stem to stern**
from head to foot/toe **from top to bottom/toe**

2 THE 'BEGINNING TO END' GROUP

These nouns are used to emphasize that the whole of an event or period of time is involved.

*I always watch both programmes **from beginning to end** without quite knowing why.*

from beginning to end **from start to finish** **from the cradle to the grave**

3 THE 'RAGS TO RICHES' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone or something changes or progresses.

*You know, people who go **from rags to riches** are afraid the good life will be snatched away from them.*

from one extreme to the other **from strength to strength**
from rags to riches

Productive use

This pattern is also used to indicate that someone or something goes from one place, thing, person, or part of something to another, as in *from place to place*, *from door to door*, and *from left to right*, or to indicate that someone or something moves in one direction and another, as in *from side to side*.

66 in N

The noun group comes after the preposition *in*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In some cases, there is no determiner.

Some nouns also follow the preposition *into*.

in	Noun group
in	groups
in	horror
in	their power
in	a rage

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'BEWILDERMENT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DESPAIR' GROUP
- 3 THE 'TROUBLE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CAPTIVITY', 'COMFORT', AND 'DEBT' GROUP
- 5 THE 'CONDITIONS' GROUP
- 6 THE 'FLAMES' GROUP
- 7 THE 'SILENCE' GROUP
- 8 THE 'PRIVACY' GROUP
- 9 THE 'CONVERSATION' GROUP
- 10 THE 'CONFORMITY' AND 'CONTRAVENTION' GROUP
- 11 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP
- 12 THE 'COLLABORATION' GROUP
- 13 THE 'PRISON' GROUP
- 14 THE 'FRONT' GROUP
- 15 THE 'DARK' GROUP
- 16 THE 'FUTURE' GROUP
- 17 THE 'FLASH' GROUP
- 18 THE 'SUCCESSION' GROUP
- 19 THE 'DEGREE' GROUP
- 20 THE 'HEIGHT' GROUP
- 21 THE 'LAYERS' GROUP
- 22 THE 'ABUNDANCE' GROUP
- 23 THE 'FORM' GROUP
- 24 THE 'THEORY' AND 'PRACTICE' GROUP
- 25 THE 'COMPARISON' GROUP
- 26 THE 'JEST' GROUP
- 27 THE 'EXPLANATION' GROUP
- 28 THE 'RESPONSE' GROUP
- 29 THE 'HONOUR' GROUP
- 30 THE 'WHISPER' GROUP
- 31 THE 'DIALECT' AND 'WRITING' GROUP
- 32 THE 'OPINION' GROUP
- 33 THE 'HONESTY' GROUP
- 34 THE 'WAY' GROUP
- 35 THE 'POWER' GROUP
- 36 THE 'HANDS' GROUP
- 37 THE 'WORK' GROUP
- 38 THE 'ROLE' GROUP
- 39 THE 'CONDITION' GROUP
- 40 THE 'FASHION' AND 'DISGRACE' GROUP
- 41 THE 'HOPE' GROUP
- 42 THE 'PROSPECT' GROUP
- 43 THE 'ADDITION' GROUP
- 44 THE 'FLOWER' GROUP
- 45 THE 'FANCY DRESS' GROUP
- 46 THE 'PLAIT' GROUP
- 47 THE 'CLOSE-UP' GROUP
- 48 THE 'ATTEMPT' GROUP
- 49 THE 'GEAR' GROUP
- 50 THE 'SIGHT' GROUP
- 51 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'BEWILDERMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings that are the cause of an action or reaction.

*She stared at him **in bewilderment**.*

*Gill seems to have trouble with his guitar and, **in a fit of pique**, throws it across the stage.*

*He had clenched his fists **in frustration** as he had listened to the speeches.*

With some of these nouns, especially *agitation*, *confusion*, *delight*, *desperation*, *excitement*, *frustration*, and *surprise*, the noun group sometimes begins with a **possessive determiner**.

***In our excitement**, we had overlooked the system's flaws.*

in admiration	in astonishment	in dismay	in shame
in agitation	in awe	in embarrassment	in shock
in agony	in bewilderment	in exasperation	in surprise
in alarm	in confusion	in excitement	in sympathy
in amazement	in consternation	in fascination	in terror
in amusement	in delight	in frustration	in triumph
in anger	in despair	in gratitude	in wonderment
in anguish	in desperation	in horror	
in anticipation	in disbelief	in puzzlement	
in appreciation	in disgust	in relief	

in a fit of ...

2 THE 'DESPAIR' GROUP

These nouns refer to someone's physical or emotional state.

*She was **in a coma** for two weeks.*

*I still love him but I am **in despair**.*

*She was **in hysterics**. She was screaming.*

*He was always **in a better mood** with a meal inside him.*

*I found him **in good spirits**.*

Repose is used when describing someone's face. *Whirl* is used when talking about someone's thoughts.

*Even when his face was **in repose**, the gleam of good humour lurked in his grey eyes.*

*My thoughts were **in a whirl**.*

in agony	in fits*	in mourning*	in stitches
in denial	in good form	in pain	in tears*
in despair*	in hysterics*	in repose	in torment
in ecstasy*	in labour 10*	in seventh heaven	
in fear (of...)	in love	in shock*	

in a cold sweat*	in a huff*	in a state 11*	in a tizzy*
in a coma*	in a panic*	in a stew 3	in a trance*
in a ferment	in a rage*	in a stupor*	in a whirl
in a frenzy*	in a reverie*	in a sulk*	
in a fury*	in a spin 10*	in a temper*	

Nouns

in a ... **frame of mind*** in a ... **mood*** in a ... **temper** 2
in a ... **humour** 3* in a ... **state of mind***

in good/bad **humour** 3 in ... **spirits**

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

When Serge Gainsbourg died two years ago, the entire French nation went **into mourning**.

Thunderstorms threw her **into a panic**.

I burst **into tears** and ran off the stage.

3 THE 'TROUBLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to trouble, disorder, or a difficult or dangerous situation.

This puts the Clinton administration **in a bind**.

I was **in a dilemma**. Should I let him go or should I let common sense prevail and veto his request?

The Government's rail privatisation programme is **in disarray**.

They made a couple of fundamental mistakes which put their lives **in jeopardy**.

The house was **in a terrible mess**.

The country is still **in the throes** of a civil war.

I knew then that I was **in trouble**.

in adversity in decline* in disorder* in jeopardy
in chaos* in difficulties* in distress 2 in trouble*
in crisis in difficulty* in ferment in turmoil*
in danger (of...) in disarray* in hot water* in uproar

in the face of ... in the grip of ...
in the firing line in the throes of ...

in a bind in a fix 21 in a muddle* in a tangle*
in a (tight) corner* in a hole 11* in a quandary in a trap*
in a decline* in a jam 8 in a scrape 4
in a dilemma in a mess* in a (tight) spot

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Postal services were thrown **into chaos** yesterday when 2,000 staff at Europe's largest sorting office walked out.

Sadly, after that his career went **into decline**.

The ship got **into difficulties** and then sank about twenty miles off the Kent coast.

They have dug themselves **into a hole**.

India's central government has got itself **into a mess** over telecommunications licences.

4 THE 'CAPTIVITY', 'COMFORT', AND 'DEBT' GROUP

These nouns refer to the situation that a person or animal is living in. This includes:

- being punished or ill-treated e.g. **in captivity**, **in custody**
- being wealthy or comfortable e.g. **in comfort**, **in the lap of luxury**

- being famous or unknown e.g. **in obscurity**, **in the limelight**
- working or not working e.g. **in retirement**, **in service**
- being ill or not e.g. **in remission**, **in traction**
- having enough or not enough money e.g. **in credit**, **in debt**

An American hostage has been released by his kidnappers after more than three years **in captivity**.

Yes, I did drive a Rolls and lived **in luxury** because that's what people expected of me.

Because of the lack of a proper career structure within television, I got stuck **in a rut** for quite a while.

in analysis* in debt 3* in luxury in remission*
in arrears* in deficit* in obscurity* in retirement*
in captivity* in detention in peace 4,6 in service
in clover in exile* in poverty* in solitary
in comfort in hibernation* in purdah* in solitary confinement
in credit 2 in hiding* in quarantine* in therapy*
in custody* in hock in recovery in traction

in the black 13* in the limelight* in the spotlight*
in the lap of luxury in the red 7*

in a rut 3*

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Tony has now been thrust **into the limelight** with a high-profile job just four months after joining Radio 1 as a trainee on an equal opportunities scheme.

Whether the groups gain new support or fade back **into obscurity** remains to be seen.

5 THE 'CONDITIONS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the situation that someone or something is in.

In these conditions the fish breed well and grow well and are active all year.

The U2 plane has been virtually **in mothballs** since the end of the cold war.

But yesterday he insisted he is still **in the running**.

in ambush in mothballs* in residence in transit
in care 4* in opposition in service* in trust
in circulation* in receivership* in solitude
in contention* in recess* in stock
in limbo* in reserve in storage*

in the circumstances in the doldrums in the running (for...)

in this case in this position*
in these conditions in this situation*

in a/no position to ...

in my element

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

When Kim was 11 her parents split up and she was taken **into care**.

6 THE 'FLAMES' GROUP

These nouns refer to a state that someone or something is in. *Contact, phase, and sync* are reciprocal nouns

Some of these companies have been **in existence** a hundred and fifty years.

Half the building was **in flames**.

The situation was still **in flux**, he said.

He was not **in the habit** of taking physical exercise.

The economy is **in a state** of collapse.

If I am **in the wrong** I do not hesitate to apologise.

in abeyance*	in flux	in operation*	in season 3
in balance*	in focus*	in order	in spate
in contact 7 (with...)*	in force*	in overdrive*	in sync (with...)
in effect*	in free fall 1*	in perspective*	in bad/good taste
in existence*	in ignorance	in phase (with...)	in transition
in favour (of...)	in keeping (with...)	in place 37*	in use*
in flames*	in luck	in proportion (to...)	
in flood	in need (of...)	in reverse*	

in the balance	in the know	in the wrong
in the dark	in the nude	
in the habit of ...*	in the right	

in a/no hurry in a state of ...*

in its death throes

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Paul got **into the habit** of dropping in to the apartment once or twice a week.

The new laws came **into operation** in March.

The whole process has now gone **into reverse** and house prices are going down, seemingly inexorably.

7 THE 'SILENCE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the way that something is done.

I have described this case **in detail** because of the lessons it can teach.

He grinned at Alberg **in a friendly fashion**.

The next day they packed up **in a hurry** and took off and I haven't seen them since.

The passengers watched **in silence**.

Rangers won the match **in fine style** and are starting to look very good indeed.

in bursts	in harmony 2	in outline 2	in slow motion
in depth	in haste	in person	in spurts
in detail	in instalments	in real time	in style 2
in error	in isolation	in safety	in tune
in full	in moderation	in silence	

in a big way	in a rush
in a hurry	in a vacuum

in ... fashion in ... style 1

in a ... fashion	in a ... vein
in a ... manner	in a ... way

8 THE 'PRIVACY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate whether something is done or said in private or not.

He indicated with his eyes that they should move around to the back of the office block where they could talk **in privacy**.

His opponents could criticize him **in public**, on television, in the papers, wherever they wanted to.

in confidence 4	in private	in secrecy
in privacy	in public	in secret

in the open 31

Open also has the pattern **into N**.

I feel a lot more should be done to bring this problem out **into the open**.

9 THE 'CONVERSATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to what someone or something is doing or experiencing. *Conference, consultation, conversation, and negotiation* are reciprocal nouns.

On the cover of the brochure is a photograph of a cheetah **in the act** of slaughtering an antelope.

Eventually he found Mr Hanley deep **in conversation** with John Major.

Design landmarks such as the Angle-poise lamp and the stackable plastic chair are still **in production** decades after their invention.

The two boys headed off **in search** of a pay phone.

in action*	in motion*	in quest of ...
in attendance	in negotiation (with...)*	in receipt of ...
in business*	in orbit*	in retreat*
in conference 2 (with...)	in overdrive*	in revolt
in consultation (with...)	in production*	in search of ...
in conversation (with...)*	in progress	in session
in flight	in pursuit (of...)	in training*

in the act of ... in the process of ...

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Essex police swung **into action** as soon as they received reports of masked youths wielding guns.

10 THE 'CONFORMITY' AND 'CONTRAVENTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the obeying or disobeying of a law or rule.

The prime minister is, **in conformity** with the constitution, chosen by the president.

The club consider the player's actions were **in contravention** of League rules.

They also say the policy is **in violation** of a New York City civil rights law.

in accord with ...	in conformity with ...*	in line (with ...)*
in accordance with ...	in contravention of ...	in obedience to ...
in breach of ...	in default (of ...)	in violation of ...
in compliance (with ...)*	in deference to ...	
in conflict with ...	in defiance of ...	

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Here we had a mother who was desperate to have her son brought **into line**.

11 THE 'AGREEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to relationships between people. With the exception of *tune*, these are reciprocal nouns.

A spokesman said the date of the talks won't be officially announced until all parties are **in agreement**.

Are you still **in contact** with them?

Unfortunately the press officer, who might be expected to clarify the situation, is **in dispute** with his employers over his contract.

in accord (with ...)	in conflict (with ...)*	in harmony 1 (with ...)
in agreement (with ...)	in contact 2 (with ...)	in step (with ...)
in communication with ...	in disagreement (with ...)	in touch (with ...)
in competition (with ...)	in dispute (with ...)	in tune with ...

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

His brash and stubborn attitude had brought him **into conflict** with the United Nations' Secretary-General in the past.

12 THE 'COLLABORATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that people do something together. *Alliance*, *cahoots*, *collusion*, *league*, and *partnership* are reciprocal nouns.

He wrote several hundred songs, often **in collaboration** with Bobby Hart.

The Russian scientists, **in co-operation** with the Russian Navy, are now planning to put a network of acoustic sensors in Avacha Bay.

We'd like states to act **in unison** in moves to improve the business climate.

in chorus 6 in concert in unison

in alliance 2 (with ...)	in company (with ...)
in association with ...	in co-operation with ...
in cahoots (with ...)	in co-ordination with ...
in collaboration (with ...)	in league (with ...)
in collusion (with ...)	in partnership with ...

Partnership also has the pattern **into N**.

In 1938 Fowler went **into partnership** with Sybil, Lady Colefax, a society decorator with premises at 29 Burton Street, Mayfair.

13 THE 'PRISON' GROUP

These nouns refer to places.

This use is very productive. It occurs with names of places, for example *in Britain*, and noun groups referring to places of many kinds, for example *in the capital*, *in the kitchen*, and *in my car*. We list below nouns which are very often used with this pattern.

People spending the night **in the open** built campfires for warmth.

They each face up to 50 years **in prison** if convicted on both charges.

The hotel is a lovely country villa **in beautiful surroundings** some 4 kilometres from Gubbio itself.

They are **in town** for next week's Market.

in bed	in dock 1	in jail	in prison
in church	in grade school	in kennels	in school
in college	in high school	in kindergarten	in town
in court 1	in hospital	in mid-air	
in digs 9	in intensive care	in port	

in the air in the dry 7 in the wild
in the country in the open 30

in ... surroundings

All these nouns except *dry* also have the pattern **into N**.

Daniel got **into bed**, but he couldn't sleep.

Mr Bedington said the animals were in a satisfactory condition and were due to be released back into the wild today.

14 THE 'FRONT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate position, either physical or metaphorical.

Some of the doubles pairs are upset at continually being in the background, especially at the major tournaments.

Somewhere in the distance a siren hooted.

It's that hostility which in part lies behind the current fighting in the east of the country.

She stopped in front of a cake shop.

Anyone who gets in my way will die.

in alignment*	in front (of...)	in place*
in apposition	in inverted commas	in position*
in brackets	in midstream	in range*

in the background*	in the front line	in the south (of...)
in the bowels of ...*	in the lead*	in the vanguard (of...)
in the distance*	in the middle (of...)	in the vicinity (of...)
in the east (of...)	in the midst of ...	in the way 18
in the forefront (of...)	in the north (of...)	in the west (of...)
in the foreground	in the rear (of...)	in the wings

in their midst*	in my wake
in my presence	in my way 18

in ...proximity (to...)

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Bob Charles moved **into the lead** after two rounds of the Senior PGA golf tournament in Indianapolis.

Last week, a 60 ton crane lifted the units **into position**.

15 THE 'DARK' GROUP

These nouns refer to light and shade.

She'll be all alone in the dark.

They always attacked in daylight in the past.

It glitters with pale blue tiles that shine eerily in the moonlight.

in darkness*	in shade
in daylight*	in shadow*

in the candlelight	in the headlights	in the shade	in the sunlight
in the dark	in the lamplight	in the shadows	in the torchlight
in the gloom	in the moonlight	in the sun	

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Power cuts regularly plunge homes **into darkness**.

16 THE 'FUTURE' GROUP

These nouns refer to times.

This use is very productive. The pattern is used to refer to years, as in in 1987. It is also used when referring to one part or stage of something, for example in the first week of June and in the early months of 1995.

We look now at the questions that will have to be addressed in the aftermath of the riots.

I'm scared stiff of what's going to happen in the future.

More than ever, people will be relying on pensions for security in old age.

In his spare time, he writes music, essays and plays.

In wartime as in peacetime the owners protected their profits to the bitter end.

In recent years there has been a great deal of public concern about the quality of education in America.

in adolescence*	in daylight	in peacetime	in term time
in adulthood*	in future	in peak time	in wartime
in autumn	in infancy 1	in perpetuity	in winter
in boyhood	in later life	in season 7	
in broad daylight	in moments of ...	in spring	
in childhood	in old age*	in summer	

in the aftermath of ...	in the early/small hours*	in the olden days
in the afternoon	in the interim	in the past
in the autumn	in the meantime	in the rush hour
in the beginning (of...)	in the meanwhile	in the spring
in the evening	in the middle of ...	in the summer
in the fall	in the morning	in the wake of ...
in the future*	in the nick of time	
in the heat of ...	in the old days	

in my absence	in my life	in my spare time
in my dotage	in my lifetime	in my younger days

in ... times	in ... years
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The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Most twins, even identical twins, separate and form their own relationships as they grow **into adulthood**.

17 THE 'FLASH' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate how soon or how quickly something happened or will happen.

This use is productive: the pattern can be used with noun groups referring to specific amounts of time, for example *in five minutes*.

It was all over in a flash, I didn't have time to think.

In time we will be in a position to pay all our debts, including the electricity bill.

in due course in seconds
in minutes in time

in a flash 15 in a tick 5
in a jiffy in a while

in the fullness of time

18 THE 'SUCCESSION' GROUP

These nouns are used when talking about a succession of events.

For the fourth year in a row, this restaurant was chosen as the place to go for seafood.

Albion have now lost nine games in succession.

She looked at each of them in turn.

in rotation in succession in waves
in sequence in turn

in a row

19 THE 'DEGREE' GROUP

These nouns refer to aspects of things. They are often used in this pattern when talking about differences or changes.

They are quite similar in appearance.

I'd like to say something about the difference between the two towns because they are very different in character.

'Offences of manslaughter vary enormously in degree,' he said.

Disposable cameras are growing in popularity in Britain.

in ability	in frequency	in price	in style
in age	in importance	in quality	in temperament
in appearance	in intensity	in quantity	in temperature
in attitude	in kind	in scale	in texture
in character	in magnitude	in shape	in tone
in colour	in manner	in size	in value
in composition	in nature	in spirit	in volume
in degree	in origin	in stature	
in design	in outlook	in strength	
in form	in popularity	in structure	

20 THE 'HEIGHT' GROUP

These nouns refer to dimensions. The preposition *in* often follows an amount.

The coins were 7.5cm in diameter and 1.3cm thick.

She has gained an inch and a half in height.

in area	in depth	in height	in weight
in breadth	in diameter	in length	in width
in circumference	in extent	in thickness	

21 THE 'LAYERS' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways in which things or people are arranged.

It showed a clear image of white, luminous saucer-shaped objects flying in formation against a blue sky.

Her clothes lay in heaps on the floor.

This coffee-soaked sponge with soft cheese and fresh raspberries in layers is best made a day ahead.

The atoms are arranged in a hexagonal pattern.

There must have been about fifty of them, all standing in a row.

in bundles*	in convoy	in layers*	in piles*
in circles*	in formation*	in line	in ranks*
in clumps*	in groups	in order	in rows
in clusters*	in heaps*	in pairs	in single file

in a ball*	in a cluster	in a curve*	in a pile*
in a bundle*	in a convoy	in a heap*	in a ring*
in a circle	in a crocodile 2	in a line*	in a row

in a ... pattern* in a ... shape*

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern *into N*.

The rice is then cut, tied into bundles, sun-dried briefly and then threshed and milled to remove the two outer husks.

Raking leaves into a pile and jumping into them brings out the child in us all.

Roll each length into a cone shape.

22 THE 'ABUNDANCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a number, quantity, or amount. This use is productive with plural numbers, for example *in threes*.

The reason there are shortages is that water is not transferred from areas where it is available in abundance to those where it is needed.

Its members are leaving in droves.

Penguin chicks have been dying in large numbers in at least three widely separated parts of Antarctica.

in abundance	in droves	in ones and twos	in profusion
in batches	in duplicate	in packs of ...	in quantity
in bulk	in flocks	in pairs	in sets of ...
in dribs and drabs	in groups (of...)	in plenty	

in ... numbers in ... quantities

Groups and pairs also have the pattern **into N**.

The children are split **into groups** of 16, each named after a fictional character such as Mickey Mouse.

23 THE 'FORM' GROUP

These nouns refer to one form of something.

There are serious doubts whether the republics will sign the treaty **in its present form**.

Jazz comes **in many guises**.

The effect was of a stately home garden **in miniature**, charming, but over-fussy for his taste.

in embryo in microcosm in miniature

in a ... form in a ... guise in a ... incarnation

Form also has the pattern **into N**.

The voltage must be measured at regular intervals and converted **into a digital form**.

24 THE 'THEORY' AND 'PRACTICE' GROUP

These nouns are used when talking about what is meant to happen or what actually happens.

These statements imply freedom of choice but **in practice** the designer's choice is restricted.

In theory the plan should bring about a cut in existing debt of up to 65 thousand million dollars.

in actuality	in law	in principle	in real life
in fact	in practice	in reality	in theory

25 THE 'COMPARISON' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating what something is being compared with or what it is connected with.

We spent hours poring over travel brochures. Choosing the wedding dress was easy **in comparison**.

Seven people were being questioned by Customs officers **in connection** with the seizure of £2m worth of heroin at Manchester airport.

Women were seen as better suited than men to charity work because they had moral qualities men lacked. They were often likened to the clergy **in this regard**.

in comparison (with/to...)	in contrast (to/with...)	in relation to ...
in connection with ...	in reference to ...	in respect of ...
in contradiction to ...	in regard to ...	

in this regard

26 THE 'JEST' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the attitude or intention of the person who does or says something.

My decisions had been made **in ignorance**.

This suggestion was made **in jest** but Laura took it seriously.

in cold blood	in good faith	in jest
in fun	in ignorance	

in full knowledge of ...

27 THE 'EXPLANATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to why someone does or says something.

'They moved her to Rose Cottage,' Emily shouted **in explanation**.

In a gesture of solidarity, MPs have already voted to freeze their salaries.

Three months ago she resumed training **in preparation** for the National Championships.

in aid of ...	in mitigation	in salutation
in explanation	in preparation for ...	in salute
in furtherance of ...	in pursuance of ...	in support of ...

in a gesture of ... in a show of ...

in the furtherance of ...

28 THE 'RESPONSE' GROUP

These nouns refer to responses.

In response to the study, the City Council appointed a Task Force on Aging, led by Dr. Walter Bortz.

The spokesman said that no further aerial bombing had been carried out by the air force **in retaliation**.

In return for a reduced sentence she agreed to give evidence against her husband.

in answer (to...)	in reaction to...	in retaliation (for...)
in compensation (for...)	in recompense (for...)	in return (for...)
in defence (of...)	in reply (to...)	in revenge (for...)
in imitation (of...)	in reprisal (for...)	in self-defence
in protest (at...)	in response (to...)	

29 THE 'HONOUR' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something is done to honour or thank someone.

He then left for Buckingham Palace, where the Queen hosted a 60th birthday lunch **in honour** of King Hussein of Jordan.

Her family were determined to start a fund **in her memory** to help the 30,000 people a year with the same disease in this country.

John Birt, Director-General of the BBC, will receive an award **in recognition** of his contribution to broadcasting.

in appreciation of ...	in honour of ...	in recognition of ...
in gratitude (to...)	in memory of ...	in remembrance (of...)
in homage (to...)	in praise of ...	

in their honour in their memory

30 THE 'WHISPER' GROUP

These nouns refer to tones or types of voice.

'Well, gents, how can I help you?' he drawled **in an American accent**.

His gaze was fixed on Lily; he spoke **in a monotone**.

Men were talking **in whispers** in every office.

in falsetto in whispers

in a falsetto in an undertone
in a monotone in a whisper

in a ... accent in a ... tone
in a ... brogue in a ... voice

31 THE 'DIALECT' AND 'WRITING' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of writing or saying something. We include here *in hardback*, *in paperback*, and *in softback*, which refer to forms of publishing a book.

This use is productive with nouns referring to languages, for example *in English*. Likewise, parents may be offended by their child speaking *in his local dialect*. He is teaching himself classical Greek so he can read his favourite works *in the original*. 'Ariadne's Children' will be published *in paperback* on 6 May. Inside was a letter written *in pencil* on yellowing lined sheets. Among his earliest literary efforts *in prose* had been tales of fantasy. This can be expressed *in simple terms* as follows.

in block capitals	in longhand	in pencil	in translation
in block letters	in manuscript	in print	in verse*
in code*	in monosyllables	in prose*	in words*
in dialect	in paperback	in shorthand	in writing
in hardback	in pen	in softback	

in ... format/in the format of ...	in ... letters	in ... terminology
in ... handwriting	in ... parlance	in ... terms*
in ... language	in ... words	

in a ... dialect in a ... language* in a ... tongue

in the original in the vernacular*

in my handwriting

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern *into N*.

Was that what gave you the idea that these stories could be turned **into verse**?

Their lyrics cannot be translated **into a European language** without losing their power and beauty.

32 THE 'OPINION' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate whose opinion you are giving. The noun group begins with a possessive determiner.

In our judgement the solicitors acted in the most flagrant disregard of their duties to Ivan and his mother.

In my opinion, criminals forfeit their rights the moment they break the law.

in my book 13	in my eyes 22	in my opinion
in my experience	in my judgement	in my view

33 THE 'HONESTY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate your attitude when saying something.

*In all **honesty** it's hard to realise that this is the place where such terrible things happened last year.*

in (all) fairness (to...) in all honesty in truth

34 THE 'WAY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that you are talking about one aspect of something, or to indicate what that aspect is.

*But in **many respects** the outlook is increasingly promising.*

*I don't think we will see a huge difference in **terms of sales**.*

*In a **way** I felt sorry for him.*

in a sense in a way

in some/many respects in some/many ways

in this respect

in terms of...

35 THE 'POWER' GROUP

These nouns refer to a position of power or authority.

*Chapman was in **charge** of the police operation on the night of the match and his officers made 17 arrests.*

*Cole put England in the **driving seat** with his early goal.*

*He has been in **power** for almost 14 years.*

in authority in control (of...) in power*
in charge (of...) in government*
in command (of...) in office*

in the driver's seat in the driving seat in the saddle

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into** N.

*When Mrs. Thatcher came **into office** in 1979 bringing down inflation was the key target.*

36 THE 'HANDS' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone has possession of someone or something or has some sort of control over them or it.

*If your adviser is trying a hard sell, steer clear – you're probably in the **clutches** of a salesman not a financial expert.*

*It emerged that fraud had taken place, and the matter is now in the **hands** of the police.*

*He said Conway had not realised the tool box was still in his **possession**.*

*He is not in **thrall** to the media.*

in my care/in the care of ...*
in my clutches/in the clutches of ...*
in my grasp/in the grasp of ...
in the grip of ...
in ... hands 3/in the hands of ...*
in my pocket/in the pocket of ...
in my possession/in the possession of ...*

in hand 33 in thrall to ...

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into** N.

*We have never been given any reason as to why the children were not placed back **into our care**.*

37 THE 'WORK' GROUP

These nouns refer to work or employment. We include here *in the pay of*, which indicates that someone is being paid secretly to do something that they may be ashamed of or that other people may criticize.

*'So you think I'm in the **pay** of the police?' Cross asked.*

*Those in **work** will have to pay higher taxes to finance the pensions and long-term care needs of the old.*

in employment* in service 17*
in harness in work*

in the employ of .../in my employ in the pay of ...

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into** N.

*The objective was to actually get people back **into employment**.*

38 THE 'ROLE' GROUP

These nouns refer to roles or jobs. They are followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *as*.

*Newton is here in his **role** as a commentator for the Seven Network.*

in my capacity 7 as ... in my position as ... in my role as ...

39 THE 'CONDITION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the good or bad condition that something or someone is in, physically or metaphorically.

*If your clothes are in **very good condition**, you can sell them through Good As New Shops.*

*She is reported to be in **poor health**.*

*I am just glad I'm still in **one piece**.*

*As a result, my life is in **ruins**.*

This country's **in a terrible state**.

in disrepair* in pieces* in shape*
in form in ruins in tatters

in a ... state in a bad way

in good/bad condition in good/bad health in working order*
in mint condition in good/bad nick in good/bad repair
in fine fettle in good order in good/bad shape

in one piece

in my prime

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Having stood empty for many years, the mansion had fallen **into disrepair**.

40 THE 'FASHION' AND 'DISGRACE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate how popular or well-thought-of someone or something is.

Rock music was **in the ascendant**, and drew most of the audiences.

He made an attempt to get back **in her good books** by doing all the housework.

She's been sent home **in disgrace**.

Glamour is back **in fashion**.

in (great) demand in disgrace in favour*
in disfavour* in fashion* in vogue*

in the ascendant in the wilderness 2*

in my good/bad books 9*

The nouns marked with * also have the pattern **into N**.

Palms have come **into favour** as plants for indoor use, too.

41 THE 'HOPE' GROUP

These nouns refer to what someone thinks or is expecting when they do something.

He leaped to his feet **in anticipation of hearty congratulations from his team-mates**.

Shortly before his death he tape-recorded his version of the night's events **in the hope that his name would one day be cleared**.

in the belief that ... in the hope of .../that ...

in anticipation of ...

42 THE 'PROSPECT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something will or may happen shortly.

With an election **in the offing**, the Opposition clearly believe that the government's handling of this matter is a potent weapon.

There's a great summer **in prospect** for theatre fans.

in prospect in store
in sight in view

in the offing in the wind 9

43 THE 'ADDITION' GROUP

These nouns are used when mentioning an additional thing.

Huge fairs are held each year in major cities across the country. **In addition**, there are hundreds of smaller fairs in shopping centers, community colleges, and high school gymnasiums.

Exclusive cleansing and treatment creams are gently applied **in combination with a heated face mask**.

in addition (to ...) in conjunction (with ...)
in combination (with ...) in parallel (with/to ...)

44 THE 'FLOWER' GROUP

These nouns refer to plants and trees having leaves or flowers.

It is a spectacular plant when **in flower**.

in (full) bloom in bud in leaf
in blossom in flower

All these nouns also have the pattern **into N**.

There's a particularly favourite orchid of mine that should be just coming **into bloom**.

45 THE 'FANCY DRESS' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that people wear. We include here *chains* and *plaster*.

This use is very productive. The pattern can be used with any noun group referring to clothes, for example **in jeans** or **in a blue dress**, and also with colour words, for example **in red**. Many of these nouns in this pattern are sometimes used to indicate someone's situation as well as their clothes. For example, **in rags** means 'very poor' and **in chains** means 'in prison'.

I love working **in period costume**.

Guests were told to come **in fancy dress**.

They even posed for photographs **in their finery**.

Armed men **in uniform** drift in and out of the shadows.

in armour	in costume	in fancy dress	in plaster
in chains	in disguise	in mourning	in rags
in civvies	in drag	in plain clothes	in uniform

in ... costume	in ... dress	in ... garb
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in my finery

Uniform also has the pattern **into** N.

They are pressing people **into** uniform because of dwindling recruitment.

46 THE 'PLAIT' GROUP

These nouns refer to hairstyles.

Her hair was up **in** a bun under the small riding hat.

Her bleached hair was scraped off her face and tied **in** plaits.

in braids	in pigtails	in ringlets
in bunches	in plaits	

in a braid	in a pigtail	in a ponytail
in a bun	in a plait	

All these nouns also have the pattern **into** N.

Her hair was pulled back **into** a girlish ponytail and fastened with a rubber band.

47 THE 'CLOSE-UP' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the way that something is seen or is filmed.

He has the theory that American actors are better **in** close-up.

He'd turned his head away; his face was **in** profile, utterly still, mask-like.

in close-up	in freeze-frame	in silhouette
in cross-section	in profile	

48 THE 'ATTEMPT' GROUP

These nouns refer to attempts to do something. They are followed by a **to**-infinitive clause.

Road blocks have been set up around Gloucester **in an** attempt to stop the men leaving the city.

in an attempt to ...	in a bid to ...	in an effort to ...
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49 THE 'GEAR' GROUP

These nouns refer to gears. This pattern is also used with ordinal numbers, as in *in second*.

He put the car **in** gear again, and turned it around.

in gear	in neutral	in reverse
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All these nouns also have the pattern **into** N.

He slammed the powerful car **into** reverse and roared across a dual carriageway.

50 THE 'SIGHT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something can be seen or heard.

Please don't repeat that **in** their hearing.

There's not a cloud **in** sight.

in earshot	in sight	in view
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in my hearing

Sight and view also have the pattern **into** N.

The memories were interrupted as the cab crested the hill and the harbour came **into** view.

51 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

I realized it was fully **in** character for Pat to make this stand.

Godmanchester was a stopping-off place for soldiers on their way north. **In** consequence the area is rich in the Roman remains.

In hindsight it seems a preposterous mistake.

It's **in** their interest not to have a war.

Some conservatives in Washington argue that the arms control process has already gone too far. They are **in** a minority.

We hurried through the curtains, just **in** time.

in cash	in doubt	in possession of ...
in character 11	in exchange	in preference to ...
in consequence (of...)	in hindsight	in readiness (for...)
in context	in part	in retrospect
in dispute	in part exchange	in time 43 (for...)

in a/the majority	in a/the minority
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in my interest/in the interest of ...	in my power
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Cash, context, and doubt also have the pattern **into** N.

To put the statistic **into** context even further, the narration pointed out that 1,000 people die on Europe's roads every 10 days.

Other productive uses

In addition to the productive uses of this pattern when mentioning place, time, number, languages, or clothes (see meaning groups 13, 14, 16, 17, 22, 31, 45, and 49), there are several other productive uses. For example, it can be used when talking about an event or situation, for example *in a fight, in an emergency, in his sleep*; when mentioning the weather, for example *in a snowstorm, in the rain*; when mentioning the content of something such as a piece of writing, a speech, or a film, for example *in her most recent book, in a talk he gave yesterday, in 'Casablanca'*; when talking about an area of activity, for example *in business*; and when saying what versions of something are available, for example *in three sizes, in blue or green*.

67 into N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *into*. In a few cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In most cases, there is no determiner.

into	anarchy
into	a grin

Most nouns with this pattern also have the pattern *in N*: see Section 66. The nouns listed here are ones which do not typically have the pattern *in N*.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'OBLIVION' GROUP
- 2 THE 'BANKRUPTCY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CRIME' GROUP
- 4 THE 'LAUGHTER' GROUP
- 5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'OBLIVION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a loss of order, existence, or awareness.

There's now a real danger that the country will slip into anarchy.

The film may go on to make a fortune, or it may sink into oblivion after that initial heady rush.

Then the dim bridge went black and he slipped into unconsciousness.

into anarchy	into liquidation	into unconsciousness
into confusion	into nothingness	
into decay	into oblivion	

2 THE 'BANKRUPTCY' GROUP

These nouns refer to bad states or situations.

They don't want to deliver the goods at such a low price they're forced into bankruptcy.

Most of the time he would be functional and feel fine, then, for no reason, he would slide into depression.

into bankruptcy	into disrepute	into mediocrity	into submission
into controversy	into disuse	into recession	
into depression	into farce	into spasm	

3 THE 'CRIME' GROUP

These nouns refer to a way of life or condition of life.

With no adequate recreational facilities, youngsters tended to drift into crime.

He is captured by pirates and sold into slavery.

into crime	into prostitution
into marriage	into slavery

4 THE 'LAUGHTER' GROUP

These nouns indicate what someone starts to do. They are usually used with the verb *break* or *burst*.

Her face broke into a smile.

There is a tremendous feeling of elation, the sort of feeling that makes even non-singers burst into song.

into applause	into sobs
into laughter	into song

into a grin	into a smile
-------------	--------------

5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Changing from one leg to another means different muscles come into play and the blood flow alters.

Melbourne artist Les Kossatz first came into prominence in the '70s, with his tragicomic, allegorical sculptures of sheep.

into law	into play	into prominence
into life	into practice	

68 of N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *of*. In some cases the noun group begins with a determiner or an adjective. In other cases there is no determiner.

of	Noun group
of	some assistance
of	significance

The preposition and noun usually come after the verb *be* or after an indefinite pronoun or another noun.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'IMPORTANCE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'HELP' GROUP
- 3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'IMPORTANCE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the state of being important or interesting.

Safety is of great importance.

He did not even ask her if she'd seen anything of interest.

All these nouns except *account*, *influence* and *moment* are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*.

But it is crime against property, the invasion of homes, that is of concern to most people, she says.

of account	of importance (to ...)	of note (to ...)
of concern (to ...)	of influence	of relevance (to ...)
of consequence (to ...)	of interest (to ...)	of significance (to ...)
of import (to ...)	of moment	

2 THE 'HELP' GROUP

These nouns refer to the state of being useful or helpful in some way.

I hope I can be of help.

The noun group sometimes begins with the determiner *any*, *little*, *more*, *much*, *no*, or *some*.

Without a manual the software is of little use.

These nouns are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*.

That will be of no comfort to the families who protested to Michael Howard last month about their treatment at the hands of the law.

of advantage (to ...)	of comfort (to ...)	of service (to ...)	of value (to ...)
of assistance (to ...)	of consolation (to ...)	of use (to ...)	
of benefit (to ...)	of help (to ...)	of utility (to ...)	

3 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There is one other noun, *antiquity*, which has this pattern. The noun group always begins with a determiner or an adjective such as *great*.

These dances are of great antiquity.

of ... antiquity

Productive use

A large number of nouns are used with this pattern after another noun as a way of describing someone or something. The noun group often begins with an adjective or determiner, as in *a country of great beauty* and *a novel of stunning quality*. However, there is sometimes no determiner, as in *a man of integrity* and *a woman of taste*.

69 on N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *on*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In some cases there is no determiner.

With some nouns, *upon* is sometimes used instead of *on*. *Upon* is a more formal or literary word.

on	Noun group
on	business
on	an equal basis
on	her deathbed

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'PREMISES' GROUP
- 2 THE 'TOP' GROUP
- 3 THE 'HORSEBACK' GROUP
- 4 THE 'TAPE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'TELEVISION' GROUP
- 6 THE 'PHONE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'LIST' GROUP
- 8 THE 'COMMITTEE' GROUP
- 9 THE 'DUTY' GROUP
- 10 THE 'HOLIDAY' GROUP
- 11 THE 'BAIL' GROUP
- 12 THE 'BASIS' GROUP
- 13 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP
- 14 THE 'SHOW' AND 'SALE' GROUP
- 15 THE 'STANDBY' GROUP
- 16 THE 'INCREASE' GROUP
- 17 THE 'ROCKS' GROUP
- 18 THE 'ALERT' GROUP
- 19 THE 'BRINK' GROUP
- 20 THE 'BRINK' GROUP
- 21 THE 'TRACK' GROUP
- 22 THE 'TIME' GROUP
- 23 THE 'CREDIT' GROUP
- 24 THE 'PENSION' GROUP
- 25 THE 'DRUGS' GROUP
- 26 THE 'BALANCE' GROUP

- 27 THE 'IMPULSE GROUP'
 28 THE 'BACK BURNER' GROUP
 29 THE 'EDGE' GROUP
 30 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'PREMISES' GROUP

These nouns refer to places. This includes:

- places where sport is played e.g. *court*, *field*
- places where drama is performed e.g. *set*, *stage*

Muster beat Becker in a five-set final, a day after collapsing on court.

'He was the best player on the field,' Ferguson said.

But when you live on an island you are at nature's beck and call.

The film was shot on location in Washington DC.

Everything on offer at this attractive tea house is made on the premises.

Armed police are on the scene and trained negotiators are talking to the man.

The sooner he is back on British soil the better.

On stage they were deliciously unpredictable.

on board 13	on death row	on grass	on site 1
on campus	on deck 2	on land 4	on stage 2
on clay 2	on dry land	on location 3	
on court 1.3	on earth 1	on set 1.6	

on the/my beat	on the floor	on the quay	on the spot 8
on the coast	on the ground	on the roof	on the street 2
on the/my doorstep 3	on the pavement	on the scene	on the waterfront
on the earth 1	on the pitch	on the shore	
on the field 2	on the premises	on the sidewalk	

on ... soil	on ... territory
-------------	------------------

on my deathbed

The following are used as normal count nouns:

beach	farm	ward
catwalk	island	

2 THE 'TOP' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating the position of something or someone.

Then he sat back and made some notes on the back of an envelope.

Sam was sitting on my lap.

The picture on the left shows an armed soldier confronting a shouting youth.

She lives with her family on the outskirts of Birmingham.

We lived on one side of the road and the factory was on the other side.

The lifebelts were on top of the wardrobe.

on the back (of...)	on the cusp (of...)	on the left (of...)
on the banks (of...)	on the edge (of...)	on the outside (of...)
on the base (of...)	on the fringes (of...)	on the outskirts (of...)
on the border (of...)	on the front (of...)	on the right (of...)
on the bottom (of...)	on the horizon 1	on the surface (of...)
on the corner (of...)	on the inside (of...)	on the top (of...)

on my knee	on my left
on my lap	on my right

on top (of...)

on ... side (of...)

3 THE 'HORSEBACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to forms of transport or things that help you get about.

But it's cheaper for me to go on the bus.

Abraham padlocked the church gates and pedalled off on his bike.

The man on horseback looked down at her and frowned.

on crutches	on horseback	on stilts
on foot	on roller-skates	

on the bus	on the train	on the tube
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The following are used as normal count nouns:

bike	coach	ship
boat	motorbike	train
bus	plane	tram

4 THE 'TAPE' GROUP

These nouns refer to ways of storing or recording sounds, pictures, or information. We include here *on our files* and *on our records*, which indicate that information is stored.

Police believe Doyle carried out 104 raids over a four-year period - the longest string of robberies on their records.

We have it all on tape.

One of the all-time masterpieces of the cinema is now out on video.

on cassette	on compact disc	on film	on video
on CD	on computer	on laser disc	on videotape
on CD-ROM	on disk	on record	on vinyl
on celluloid	on file	on tape	

on our files	on our records
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Nouns

5 THE 'TELEVISION' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with broadcasting. We include here *Internet*. This pattern is also used with specific channels or programmes, as in *on BBC 1* and *on Newsnight*.

It allowed ministers and senior officials to be directly questioned and opposed on air.
He also appeared on TV programmes such as Five Alive and the Ronn Lucas Show.
The neighbors came out and told her the terrible news they'd heard on the radio.
I have always had a problem with cosmetics adverts in magazines and on television.

on air	on long wave	on screen	on VHF
on cable	on medium wave	on short wave	
on camera	on radio	on television	

on the air	on the Internet	on the television
on the box	on the radio	

This is used as a normal count noun:

programme

6 THE 'PHONE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the telephone system. We include here *grapevine*, which is also concerned with communication.

'We heard on the grapevine that he was leaving politics well before the announcement,' she said.

Mark is on the phone to her now.

on the blower (to...)	on the line 10	on the telephone (to...)
on the grapevine 1	on the phone (to...)	

7 THE 'LIST' GROUP

These nouns refer to lists.

Electoral reform is now on Labour's agenda.

High on the list of the most promising areas for research are electronics, sensors, computers and software.

The fourth artist on the shortlist is Mark Wallinger, 36.

Newcastle's Swiss international defender Marc Hottiger has been placed on the transfer list at his own request.

on the danger list	on the transfer list
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The following are used as normal count nouns:

agenda	payroll	waiting list
list	scoresheet	
menu	shortlist	

8 THE 'COMMITTEE' GROUP

These nouns refer to an official group. They are all used as normal count nouns.

There were three people on the committee at that stage.

board	panel
committee	team

9 THE 'DUTY' GROUP

These nouns refer to activities that people are involved in, particularly to do with work, or with aggressive behaviour. We include here *attachment*, *loan*, and *secondment*, which indicate that someone is temporarily working in a different place.

George goes overseas on assignment five or six times a year.

The Democrats are back on the attack.

I told them he'd gone away on business.

He's on a course this week at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst.

I'm going on a date with Justin.

Two guards with dogs are on duty at night and one during the day.

In Atlanta, mobs went on the rampage, smashing windows and looting stores.

She has two full-time secretaries, one of whom is on secondment from the Royal Navy.

She's gone on a spending spree and run up a debt of £3,200 so far.

on active duty	on business	on parade
on active service	on duty	on patrol
on (...) alert	on exercise 5	on secondment (from/to...)
on assignment	on guard	on tour 1
on attachment 3 (to...)	on loan (from/to...)	

on the attack	on the move	on the rampage
on the go	on the offensive	on the road 4
on the march	on the prowl	on the scrounge

These nouns are used as normal count nouns:

assignment	date (with...)	mission (to...)	tour 1
bender	dig 6	quest	wild goose chase
course 5	exercise 5	spree	

10 THE 'HOLIDAY' GROUP

These nouns refer to absence, holidays, or journeys. The nouns referring to holidays or journeys are sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase indicating a destination or other place.

I've always wanted to go on a cruise.

Glen Wilgrove was **on holiday** in Holland when he took this photo of a sea of tulips in the famous Keukenhof Gardens.

Every time I come home **on leave**, something like that always happens, and I can't wait to go back.

Many public service workers are **on strike** today.

The young man was about to leave **on a trip** to California.

on holiday 1	on leave 22	on safari	on strike 1
on honeymoon	on sabbatical	on sick leave	on vacation 2

The following are used as normal count nouns:

cruise	honeymoon	safari	vacation 2
flight	journey	tour 3,4	visit
holiday 1	sabbatical	trip	voyage

11 THE 'BAIL' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with the legal system, especially with what happens before, during, and after a trial.

He was released **on bail** and ordered to stand trial on May 23.

I spent six weeks **on remand** but eventually I was acquitted.

Its parliamentary leader is **on trial** for bribery.

on bail	on parole	on remand
on oath 2	on probation	on trial 1 (for ...)

12 THE 'BASIS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the basis or grounds for something.

Have you ever felt vulnerable **on account** of your size?

Most lawyers will provide advice **on this basis**.

He was subsequently arrested **on charges** of plotting a coup.

People have criticised this film **on the grounds** that it is 'just another period drama'.

That team was selected **on merit**.

'I have no complaints **on that score**,' he says.

The following year, largely **on the strength** of his good looks and handsome physique, he landed a supporting part in a Broadway show.

In the case of *assumption*, *basis*, *premise*, and *principle*, *upon* is sometimes used instead of *on*.

They advocated humane treatment based **upon psychoanalytic principles**.

on ability	on condition that ...	on merit	on principle
on account of ...	on instinct	on points	on suspicion of ...

on ... account	on ... charges	on ... terms
on ... analysis	on ... evidence	
on ... authority	on ... form	

on the facts	on the strength of ...
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on that/this score

The following are used as normal count nouns. With the exception of *sliding scale*, they are always used with words which make the meaning more specific.

assumption	footing	premise 1	time scale
basis	ground 9,11	principle	
count 9	lines 22,23	sliding scale	

13 THE 'REQUEST' GROUP

These nouns refer to actions after which, or as a result of which, something happens or is done.

Now it has been announced that he's giving up public performances **on the advice** of his doctor.

Nearly half of all death sentences are overturned **on appeal**.

On his arrival, he said Moscow wanted an honest dialogue with Lithuania.

He said it appeared the aircraft had exploded **on impact**.

A long low table turns out **on closer inspection** to be a large mirror set on bricks.

A list of the winners' names is available **on request** at the address below.

With most of these nouns, *upon* is sometimes used instead of *on*.

Your order will be processed immediately **upon receipt**.

on appeal	on contact	on instructions from ...
on application	on demand	on receipt (of ...)
on arrival	on departure	on request
on command	on impact	on sight
on completion (of ...)	on (...) inspection	

on my advice/on the advice of ...
on my instructions/on the instructions of ...
on my orders/on the orders of ...

on my arrival	on his death	on my return
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on the completion of ...

on ... acquaintance

14 THE 'SHOW' AND 'SALE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something is being displayed or made available.

*It has around 5,000 properties **on its books**, half of which it owns.*

*The house has been **on the market** for 18 months and I've only had two couples who came to view.*

*Clueless is currently **on release** nationwide.*

*Tickets are **on sale** now, priced £6.50.*

*Works by two of Britain's post-modernist painters, Colin Smith and Ian Jones, are **on show** at the Barbican's Concourse Gallery from 27 April until 21 May.*

on display	on exhibition	on release 11	on tap 6,7
on draught 2	on loan	on sale	on view
on exhibit	on offer	on show	

on the market 11

on our books 4

15 THE 'STANDBY' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone is ready to do something if they are needed.

*Hundreds of workmen are **on standby** ready to go to the worst affected places.*

on call on hand on standby

16 THE 'INCREASE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something is increasing or improving, or that it is decreasing or getting worse. *On the up* is used in British English to mean that something is improving (see also meaning group 19 below.)

*A study by the Worldwatch Institute says worldwide smoking is **on the decline**, but smoking in the Third World nations is increasing.*

*Crime is **on the increase**.*

*Midlands football is **on the up** again.*

on the decline	on the rise	on the wane
on the increase	on the up	
on the mend	on the upswing	

17 THE 'ROCKS' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone or something is in a bad state or situation.

*The managers are well aware that, if they fail to achieve their goals, their jobs are **on the line**.*

*My marriage was **on the rocks**.*

on the blink 4	on the rocks 11
on the line 49	on the ropes 8

18 THE 'ALERT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone is alert.

*Troops stationed in the region have been put **on alert**.*

*He warned holidaymakers to be **on their guard**.*

*As a non-writer, she relies on a pool of mostly Irish songwriters and is always **on the lookout** for new talent.*

on alert

on the alert (for ...) on the lookout (for ...) on the watch (for ...)

on my guard (against ...) on my toes

19 THE 'LEVEL' GROUP

These nouns indicate that someone is honest. *On the up and up* is used in American English with this meaning.

*Senior managers spend so much time flying round the world rather than just picking up the telephone because they need to look people in the eyes and see if they are **on the level**.*

on the level on the mark on the up and up

20 THE 'BRINK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a time just before something happens.

*The Coalition was **on the brink** of collapse.*

The preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*I was **on the point** of returning to bed when a motor bus chugged into view.*

on the brink of ...	on the point of ...	on the verge of ...
on the eve of ...	on the threshold of ...	

21 THE 'TRACK' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with success or the likelihood of success.

*He now believes he is firmly **on the road** to victory.*

*While the construction completions were **on target**, it appeared that the necessary sales were unlikely to occur.*

*The British economy is coming back **on track**.*

on course (for/to ...) on target (for ...) on track (for/to ...)

on the road to ...

22 THE 'TIME' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something happens at the right time.

*They want the trains to arrive **on time**.*

on cue on schedule on time

23 THE 'CREDIT' GROUP

These nouns refer to systems of payment, for goods or for work done.

*They shouldn't be working **on commission** like salesmen.*

*Parents think they can keep up with these demands by buying everything **on credit**.*

**on commission on hire purchase on piecework
on credit on HP on subscription**

24 THE 'PENSION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a particular source of income. This use is productive: noun groups referring to particular incomes are also used with this pattern, as in *on £370 a week* and *on £40,000 a year*.

*This would be a powerful encouragement to the unemployed to find a job instead of living **on benefit**.*

*At the beginning of last year I was **on the dole** for three months.*

*I think it most unfair that they intend to make my wife wait until age 65 before she can retire **on a pension**.*

Earnings and income are always used with words that make the meaning more specific.

*Social security assistance is available for people **on low incomes**.*

on benefit on income support on welfare

on the dole

The following are used as normal count nouns.

earnings income pension

25 THE 'DRUGS' GROUP

These nouns refer to drugs or medicine. We include here *dialysis*, which indicates a treatment. This use is productive: the names of other drugs can be used with this pattern.

*They probably think I'm **on drugs** or something.*

*I never went out when I was **on heroin**.*

*Her GP put her **on tranquillisers**.*

**on amphetamines on drugs on medication on Valium
on cocaine on ecstasy on steroids
on dialysis on heroin on tranquillizers**

26 THE 'BALANCE' GROUP

These nouns are used when making a general or considered statement.

*Both work well, but I think **on balance** I prefer the porcelain one.*

***On the whole** the changes are positive and have been welcomed throughout the world.*

on average on balance

on the whole

27 THE 'IMPULSE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something is done with or without a lot of thought.

***On impulse**, I invited him to accompany my family on the plane to Hyannisport for the weekend.*

*Was it an accident or did he do it **on purpose**?*

*The man he'd asked was the director – who hired him **on the spot**.*

on impulse on purpose on reflection

on the spot

on a whim

28 THE 'BACK BURNER' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone or something is treated in a way that shows they are important or not important.

*The deal has been put **on ice** because there appears to be a problem over the fee.*

*Increasingly Britain is in danger of being left **on the sidelines**, as the rest of Europe moves willingly towards further integration.*

on ice

**on the back burner on the front burner
on the cutting edge 1 (of ...) on the sidelines 3**

29 THE 'EDGE' GROUP

These nouns refer to how someone feels about a person or a situation.

*She was obviously worried and **on edge**.*

*We're still **on good terms** and he's a frequent visitor to my office.*

on the defensive on edge on ... terms (with ...)

30 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

*Although she is far from being **on the breadline**, the duchess has faced enormous outgoings.*

Sir James believes that business and the environment are **on a collision course**.

Nigel revealed that he had been **on a diet** and lost four stone in twelve months.

The war on drugs must be waged **on two fronts** – supply and demand.

There is a faint ray of hope **on the horizon**, however.

One plane is already **on order** and will be delivered in March next year.

It's clear that there's a willingness **on the part of everyone concerned** to make sure nothing gets in the way of the peace talks.

In Greece, sixty five prisoners are still **on the run** after a mass breakout from a top security prison last night.

On the way I banged into a side-table which instantly crashed to the floor, but although I winced I did not stop.

on fire	on order	on sufferance
on hold	on paper 11,12	on tiptoe
on occasion	on prescription	on trial 2,3

on my behalf/on behalf of ...	on my side/on the side of ...
on my conscience	on my trail/on the trail of ...
on my part/on the part of ...	

on the bandwagon	on the fly	on the quiet
on the boil	on the gravy train	on the run 55 (from ...)
on the breadline	on the hoof	on the throne
on the cards 13	on the horizon 3	on the town 8
on the downside	on the loose	on the way/on my way somewhere

on a collision course 1,2 (with ...)

This is used as a normal count noun:

diet

The following are used as normal count nouns, but always with words which make the meaning more specific:

front level ticket

Other productive uses

In addition to the productive uses mentioned above, this pattern is also used productively

to indicate what day something happens, as in *on Monday*, *on Saturday night*, and *on Christmas Day*.

70 out of N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *out of*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In most cases, however, there is no determiner.

out of	Noun group
out of	desperation
out of	the running
out of	proportion

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'CURIOSITY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DANGER' GROUP
- 3 THE 'BUSINESS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'FASHION' GROUP
- 5 THE 'OFFICE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'BALANCE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'COMA' GROUP
- 8 THE 'TOUCH' GROUP
- 9 THE 'POSITION' GROUP
- 10 THE 'PRISON' GROUP
- 11 THE 'SIGHT' GROUP
- 12 THE 'CHARACTER' GROUP
- 13 THE 'CONTEXT' GROUP
- 14 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'CURIOSITY' GROUP

These nouns refer to people's motives for doing something. This is a productive use: other nouns referring to feelings are occasionally used with this pattern.

*Some people come to us **out of curiosity**, but most want to gain some clarity and purpose to their lives.*

*People who live in the area always know what's going on but they often say nothing **out of fear**.*

*She explained that students should help each other learn, not **out of a sense of duty**, but because they know each other as people.*

out of affection	out of consideration for ...	out of frustration
out of altruism	out of conviction	out of greed
out of anger	out of courtesy	out of guilt
out of benevolence	out of curiosity	out of ignorance
out of boredom	out of deference	out of interest
out of charity	out of desperation	out of jealousy
out of choice	out of duty	out of kindness
out of compassion	out of embarrassment	out of love
out of concern for ...	out of fear (of .../that ...)	out of loyalty

out of malice	out of pride	out of spite
out of necessity	out of respect	out of sympathy
out of pique	out of self-interest	
out of pity	out of shame	

out of a desire to .../for ...	out of a need to .../for ...
out of a fear of .../that ...	out of a sense of ...

2 THE 'DANGER' GROUP

These nouns refer to situations.

The three survivors are now all **out of danger**.

They were **out of their depth** in the World Cup finals in Italy but the opposition is much weaker here.

He is much admired by those who know him, but is happy to stay **out of the limelight**.

Hiding, retirement, and shell are typically used with the verb come.

Martina Navratilova will come **out of retirement** to play in the US Federation Cup team that faces Austria next month.

Wedlock is typically used with be born.

More than a quarter of all children are born **out of wedlock**.

out of circulation	out of hand 44	out of season 3,7	out of use
out of contention	out of hiding	out of service 25	out of wedlock
out of control	out of luck	out of stock	
out of danger	out of mothballs	out of storage	
out of debt	out of retirement	out of trouble	

out of the firing line	out of the running
out of the limelight	out of the spotlight

out of my control	out of my element 8	out of my shell 5
out of my depth 14	out of my hands 3	

3 THE 'BUSINESS' GROUP

These nouns are used when talking about a lack of employment or commercial success.

The National Farmers' Union says thousands of farms will go **out of business** unless there are radical changes in government and European Community policies.

He's been **out of work** for a year and written 300 letters without success.

out of business	out of work
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out of a job

4 THE 'FASHION' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something or someone is no longer popular.

Jeans have never gone **out of fashion**.

out of fashion	out of style
out of favour	out of vogue

5 THE 'OFFICE' GROUP

These nouns refer to an official position, especially a government position.

But it is hard to persuade voters that you have managerial skills if you have been **out of office** for 11 years.

out of government	out of office	out of power
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6 THE 'BALANCE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something or someone is in a particular state, especially a state in which something is not right. Phase and sync are reciprocal nouns.

Huge sections of the rail network are **out of action** and travel by road is extremely hazardous.

This relationship is **out of balance**.

I was going **out of my mind** with worry.

He proposed a game after tea, and I was very glad that I had said I was **out of practice**, because he beat me twice running with humiliating ease.

Habit is typically used with get.

Try to get **out of the habit** of adding salt to food at the table.

out of action	out of form	out of phase (with ...)
out of adjustment	out of joint	out of practice
out of balance	out of keeping	out of proportion
out of breath	out of kilter	out of scale
out of commission	out of operation	out of shape
out of condition	out of order	out of sync (with ...)
out of focus	out of perspective	out of whack

out of the habit (of ...)	out of the picture
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out of my head	out of my mind	out of my wits
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7 THE 'COMA' GROUP

These nouns refer to states in which a person or animal is not fully conscious or aware.

Crash victim Jim Hayes has defied doctor's predictions by coming **out of a coma** after four years.

They are pollinated by the first bees to venture **out of hibernation**.

out of hibernation

The following are used as normal count nouns:

coma	trance
------	--------

8 THE 'TOUCH' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate a lack of contact or compatibility.

*He said the proposal was **out of step** with Australia's immigration policy.*

*They are completely **out of touch**. They wouldn't know what ordinary people were saying.*

out of contact (with ...) out of step (with ...) out of tune (with ...)
out of line (with ...) out of touch (with ...)

9 THE 'POSITION' GROUP

These nouns indicate position.

*He said, 'There's a bone **out of position**.'*

*He kicked the overturned chair **out of his way** and made a desperate dash across the room, straight for the door.*

out of alignment out of place out of position

out of the/my way 18

10 THE 'PRISON' GROUP

These nouns refer to places.

This use is very productive. The pattern is used with noun groups referring to places of many kinds, for example *out of the country* and *out of their homes*.

*I'd like to put it all behind me, but I've achieved nothing since I came **out of prison**.*

*I was **out of town** at the time, so I don't know exactly how it happened.*

out of bed out of court out of jail out of school
out of college out of hospital out of prison out of town

11 THE 'SIGHT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something cannot be seen, heard, or reached.

*'Look,' said Rose, when they were **out of earshot**. 'That boy can't stay here.'*

*Keep matches and lighters well **out of their reach**.*

*He waved to them until the car was **out of sight**.*

out of bounds out of range out of sight
out of earshot out of reach out of view

out of my reach out of my sight

12 THE 'CHARACTER' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that something is unusual.

*What he did was totally **out of character** and he must have been under an enormous strain.*

*Even when I was a kid I knew there was something **out of the ordinary** about her.*

out of character out of place 44

out of the ordinary

13 THE 'CONTEXT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the circumstances of an action.

*A BBC spokeswoman said Mr Birt had been 'quoted **out of context**.'*

*Our main concern **here** is about protecting those patients who use the hospital service **out of hours**, and at weekends.*

out of context out of hours out of sequence

14 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other nouns which have this pattern.

*But my own family were safe, so long as we did not step **out of line**.*

*Although the boat has been **out of production** for 17 years, good examples of the class retain their popularity.*

*Luckily the damage was superficial, but for him any more climbing was **out of the question**.*

System is usually used with *get*.

*I need someone to help me get this **out of my system**.*

out of line 52 out of print
out of production out of uniform

out of my league out of my system

out of the question

Other productive uses

In addition to the productive use of this pattern when mentioning a motive or place (see meaning groups 1 and 10), there are several other productive uses. For example, it can be used when talking about getting out of a situation, for example *out of the recession* or *out of this dilemma*, or when talking about an area of activity, for example *out of politics*.

71 to N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *to*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In other cases, there is no determiner.

to	Noun group
to	my horror
to	the right
to	ashes
to	perfection

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'SURPRISE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'LEFT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SCHOOL' GROUP
- 4 THE 'LUNCH' GROUP
- 5 THE 'STOP' GROUP
- 6 THE 'BITS' GROUP
- 7 THE 'EXTENT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'SPECIFICATION' GROUP
- 9 THE 'EFFECT' GROUP
- 10 THE 'SOUND' GROUP
- 11 THE 'END' GROUP
- 12 THE 'MIND' GROUP
- 13 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'SURPRISE' GROUP

These nouns refer to feelings that someone has when something happens.

Many sufferers find **to their delight** that in their late forties and fifties their symptoms gradually recede.

To his dismay, the public response was one of indifference.

And rather **to my surprise** I was elected.

to my alarm	to my delight	to my horror
to my amazement	to my disappointment	to my joy
to my amusement	to my disgust	to my relief
to my astonishment	to my dismay	to my shame
to my chagrin	to my embarrassment	to my surprise
to my consternation	to my frustration	

2 THE 'LEFT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the position of something. We include here **to the fore**, which indicates a metaphorical position.

She took her children on picket lines against racist bosses, and they were raised in a house where 'the woman question' was always **to the fore**.

To the left was a three-car garage.

To the north of St-Remy are the Roman towns of Orange and Vaison-la-Romaine.

Now we had Serbia **to port** and Romania **to starboard**.

The matron had an office on the ground floor, **to the rear** of the house.

The pair of men **to my right** were bankers, I think.

to port	to starboard	to windward
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to the east (of...)	to the north (of...)	to the side (of...)
to the fore (of...)	to the rear (of...)	to the south (of...)
to the left (of...)	to the right (of...)	to the west (of...)

to my left	to my right
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3 THE 'SCHOOL' GROUP

These nouns refer to places or institutions.

This use is very productive. The pattern is used with names of places, for example **to Britain** and with noun groups referring to places of many kinds, for example **to my house**, **to the museum**, and **to the ground**. It is also used to indicate that someone goes somewhere in order to attend an event, as in **to a party**.

The number of women sent **to jail** has reached a 15-year high, according to new figures released yesterday.

They went **to school** together every day.

'My dad told me never to go **to sea**,' Bill, the engineer, said, 'but I went anyway.'

to base	to court	to nursery	to sea
to bed	to hospital	to port	to town
to church	to jail	to prison	to university
to college	to kindergarten	to school	to work

4 THE 'LUNCH' GROUP

These nouns refer to meals.

Today Len and Joyce came **to lunch**.

to breakfast	to lunch	to tea
to dinner	to supper	

5 THE 'STOP' GROUP

These nouns refer to the fact that something stops moving, progressing, or existing.

The party was drawing **to a close**.

Traffic was brought **to a standstill** on May 18 by a gas explosion which blew off a manhole cover on the corner of Edward and Elizabeth streets.

The taxi came **to a stop**.

to a close	to a halt	to a stop
to an end	to a standstill	

6 THE 'BITS' GROUP

These nouns refer to the state that something is in after it has been destroyed or has fallen into disrepair.

Many schools are falling **to bits**.

The olives are crushed **to a pulp** by steel or stone rollers.

Hotels have been reduced **to rubble**, sugar-cane fields flattened and palm trees sliced in half.

Suddenly we started trashing it all, breaking up statues and tearing the paintings to **shreds**.

to ashes	to pieces	to ribbons	to shreds
to bits	to powder	to rubble	to smithereens
to dust	to pulp	to ruins	to tatters

to a paste	to a pulp
to a powder	to a puree

7 THE 'EXTENT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate the extent or degree of an action or state. Many of them are used with only one or two verbs or adjectives, or with a restricted range.

I'm thrilled to **bits**.

Leonard was shaken to the **core**; he'd never seen or read anything like it.

The governors accused me of drinking to **excess** but I am not an alcoholic.

To some **extent** this strategy has worked.

He was generous to a **fault**, always bearing presents to whatever home he was visiting.

Our funds are already stretched to the **limit**, yet we cannot ignore the real need we see on the streets every night.

to bits	to excess	to tears
to capacity	to overflowing	
to death 10	to pieces	

to the bone 11,12	to the hilt 2	to the max
to the core 9,10	to the limit	to the maximum
to the full	to the marrow 4	to the utmost

to a fault 9	to a T
--------------	--------

to its foundations	to my heart's content
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to a ... degree	to a ... extent
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8 THE 'SPECIFICATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to the way that someone wants something done or made.

I followed the instructions to the **letter**.

Although each gown is designed and made to **order**, there is a rail of sample creations to spark the imagination.

When you've had a job done, don't pay the final bill in full until the work has been completed to your **satisfaction**.

The authority last week admitted it had discovered on November 3 last year that some maintenance was not being done to **specification**.

Do we want more people educated to a **moderate standard**, or just a few educated to a **high standard**?

to order	to scale	to taste 12
to perfection	to specification	

to the letter 5

to my liking	to my specifications
to my satisfaction	to my taste 10

to a ... standard

9 THE 'EFFECT' GROUP

These nouns refer to the effect of something.

Credit cards can be used to your **advantage** if you pay off your bill in full each month and avoid paying interest.

Mr Metcalfe feels the museum is using advertising to good **effect**.

to advantage	to no avail	to ... effect
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to my advantage	to my disadvantage
-----------------	--------------------

to the glory of ...

10 THE 'SOUND' GROUP

These nouns refer to sounds.

'What are you going to do about it?' he said to **applause**.

He appeared to give up the second set, losing 6-1, and left the court to a **chorus** of boos.

To **roars** of laughter, he added: 'This is a shame, because I'm constantly intrigued by what I have to say myself.'

But now, as then, I fell asleep to the **sound** of the sea in the rocky cove below.

to applause	to cheers	to music
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to howls of ...	to roars of ...	to shouts of ...
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to the accompaniment of ...	to the music of ...	to the sound of ...
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to a chorus of ...

11 THE 'END' GROUP

These nouns refer to points in time.

The campaign has **to date** achieved remarkable results.

I'll fight **to the end**.

To the last, he denied any treason against the King.

to date

to the end to the grave 2
to the end of time to the last

to this day

12 THE 'MIND' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that you are giving the opinion or belief of one particular person.

There was no bad blood between anybody in the management team **to your knowledge**?

To my mind, there are few places more beautiful than an orchard.

to my knowledge to my mind to my way of thinking

13 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Companies are also learning **to their cost** that the apparent convergence between different cultures has not gone as far as they thought.

To his credit, Ford recognized the problem.

They must have known I wasn't going to play, but no-one had the decency to tell me **to my face**.

Almost **to a man**, the president's senior advisers were against the idea.

At 16 I did not have a qualification **to my name**.

Keep your letter short and **to the point**.

It was already hot. The panels beneath the handrail were warm **to the touch**.

But, over the past nine years, the council has also profited – **to the tune of more than £7 million**.

to hand

to a man 19

to the day to the taste 3
to the point 26 to the touch > 7

to my cost 13 to my face 26 to my name
to my credit 17, 18 to my feet
to my discredit to my knees

to the exclusion of ... to the tune of ...

72 under N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *under*. In most cases, there is no determiner. In some cases, however, the noun group begins with a determiner.

under	Noun group
under	arrest
under	great strain
under	his command
under	an assumed name

Note that some nouns with this pattern (*contract, escort, guarantee, oath, review, siege, and warranty*) are count nouns which are normally preceded by a determiner. In this pattern, however, they have no determiner.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ATTACK' GROUP
- 2 THE 'LEADERSHIP' GROUP
- 3 THE 'REGIME' GROUP
- 4 THE 'STRAIN' GROUP
- 5 THE 'CONSIDERATION' GROUP
- 6 THE 'CONSTRUCTION' GROUP
- 7 THE 'GUIDELINES' GROUP
- 8 THE 'GUARANTEE' GROUP
- 9 THE 'HEADING' GROUP
- 10 THE 'PSEUDONYM' GROUP
- 11 THE 'PRETENCE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'MISAPPREHENSION' GROUP
- 13 THE 'ANAESTHETIC' GROUP
- 14 THE 'COVER' GROUP
- 15 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ATTACK' GROUP

These nouns refer to a situation in which someone is being attacked, imprisoned, or restricted. In the case of *attack, fire, and threat*, it may be a thing, rather than a person, that is being attacked or threatened.

About a dozen military officers involved in the December coup attempt are now **under arrest**.

The government is **under attack** from the opposition for failing to predict the problem.

In 1992, his work came **under another barrage** of criticism in the French press.

Throughout the Americas, many native cultures are crumbling **under the onslaught** of outside pressures.

Other local populations of species are also **under threat** of extinction.

Many died under torture, others committed suicide.

under arrest	under duress	under provocation
under assault	under escort	under sentence of death
under attack (from ...)	under fire 14	under siege
under bombardment	under guard	under threat (of ...)
under curfew	under house arrest	under torture

under a barrage (of ...) under a curse under an embargo

under ... onslaught/under the onslaught of ...

2 THE 'LEADERSHIP' GROUP

These nouns refer to a situation in which someone guides, protects, or is in charge of people or things. The noun is usually used with a **possessive** or preceded by an adjective.

Under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's development has been astonishing.

Nato aircraft are under orders to shoot down any hostile aircraft in such zones.

He's now said to be under police protection.

under ... aegis/under the aegis of ...
 under ... auspices/under the auspices of ...
 under ... authority/under the authority of ...
 under my captaincy/under the captaincy of ...
 under ... care/under the care of ...
 under ... chairmanship/under the chairmanship of ...
 under my charge/under the charge of ...
 under ... command/under the command of ...
 under ... control/under the control of ...
 under ... direction/under the direction of ...
 under my editorship/under the editorship of ...
 under ... escort
 under ... flag 3/under the flag of ...
 under ... guidance/under the guidance of ...
 under ... influence/under the influence of ...
 under ... jurisdiction/under the jurisdiction of ...
 under ... leadership/under the leadership of ...
 under ... management/under the management of ...
 under ... ownership/under the ownership of ...
 under ... presidency/under the presidency of ...
 under ... protection/under the protection of ...
 under ... rule/under the rule of ...
 under ... supervision/under the supervision of ...
 under ... sway/under the sway of ...
 under ... tutelage/under the tutelage of ...
 under ... umbrella 3/under the umbrella of ...
 under ... wing 13/under the wing of ...

under escort under protection under supervision

under instructions to ... under orders to ...

3 THE 'REGIME' GROUP

These nouns refer to a political regime or system.

Under Labour their crops were subsidized and gas cost about a dime a gallon.

The country had, in any case, been under Fascist occupation since 1942.

You do realize that under the new regime, the unemployment figures have fallen drastically?

under apartheid under feudalism under occupation
 under capitalism under Labour

under ... occupation under ... rule

under the Tories

The following are used as normal count nouns, but are always used with words which make the meaning more specific:

government regime

4 THE 'STRAIN' GROUP

These nouns refer to pressure that affects someone or something.

The economy is already struggling under the burden of the war in the north.

When under pressure, he sweats profusely and mops at his brow.

They are in poor health and obviously under strain and worried because of these events.

under pressure (to ...) under strain under stress

under the burden of ... under the shadow of ... under the weight of ...

5 THE 'CONSIDERATION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a situation in which someone or something is being watched, studied, questioned, or discussed.

Another option under consideration involved closing the accident and emergency centre.

They embraced under the puzzled gaze of the officer and other passengers waiting to leave for the shore.

In another part of the capital today, the world of big-time college athletics will be put under the microscope.

The move comes at a time when official statistics are already under close scrutiny.

They had obviously had the house under surveillance for some time.

under consideration	under investigation	under study
under cross-examination	under negotiation	under surveillance
under debate	under observation	under suspicion
under discussion	under questioning	under test
under examination	under review	
under interrogation	under scrutiny	

under the microscope 2 under the spotlight 4

under the eye of ... under the gaze of ...

under ... watch

6 THE 'CONSTRUCTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to a situation in which something is being worked on.

An entire city is currently under construction in the Chilean Atacama desert.

under construction under development under repair

7 THE 'GUIDELINES' GROUP

These nouns refer to an arrangement, law, or set of rules. They are used with this pattern when someone is indicating what an arrangement, law, or set of rules entails.

The problem is that under Article 8 of the 1946 whaling convention, killing of whales is allowed for scientific purposes.

Experts said Martin was lucky not to have been jailed for six months or more, under guidelines laid down by the Appeal Court last July.

He said that under current legislation a pharmacist could own a maximum of four pharmacies.

Under this scheme the number of working hours would be lowered to 1,800 hours a year by 1992.

The following are used as normal count nouns, but are always used with words which make the meaning more specific:

accord	clause	lease	proposal
Act	code	legislation	rule
agreement	constitution	pact	scheme
amendment	contract	plan	section
arrangement	deal	policy	system
article 4	law	powers	treaty

The following are used as normal plural nouns, but are always used with words that make the meaning more specific:

guidelines	regulations
provisions	terms

8 THE 'GUARANTEE' GROUP

These nouns refer to a legal promise or agreement. They are used with this pattern to indicate that the promise or agreement exists or is valid at a particular time.

She is now under contract to the producers for the next 12 months.

As it was still under guarantee, he took it back to the shop and a month later was told it had been repaired.

under caution	under guarantee	under oath
under contract	under licence	under warranty

9 THE 'HEADING' GROUP

These nouns refer to words that label or define something.

They are used as normal count nouns, but are always used with words that make the meaning more specific.

And as I was campaigning mainly for votes at eighteen, I campaigned under the banner of the National Teenage Party.

These may be summed up under the heading: Nothing has Changed.

banner	headline	slogan
heading	rubric	title

10 THE 'PSEUDONYM' GROUP

These nouns refer to a false name. They are used as normal count nouns.

His classic, *A Grief Observed*, was first published under a pseudonym, the author's identity only being revealed after his death.

Name is always used with words which make the meaning more specific, and can be used to refer to a genuine name.

In order to pay the rent, she penned two romantic sagas under the name of Caroline Harvey.

He also registered at a hotel room under his own name.

alias	name	pseudonym
assumed name	pen name	stage name

11 THE 'PRETENCE' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with pretending.

Many youths have taken to armed crime under the guise of being freedom fighters.

Under the pretence of inspecting ancient monuments, he would disappear for extended shooting trips.

under the guise of ...	under the pretence of .../that	under the pretext of .../that
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12 THE 'MISAPPREHENSION' GROUP

These nouns refer to mistaken beliefs. They are used as normal count nouns.

'Karen seems to be under a misapprehension,' Len said.

Impression and misconception are always used with words that make the meaning more specific.

They are under the impression that I am an extremist and that is why they are against me.

delusion	impression	misconception
illusion	misapprehension	

13 THE 'ANAESTHETIC' GROUP

These nouns are concerned with things that affect someone's level of consciousness.

*Disfiguring birthmarks can now be removed with a laser under local **anaesthetic**.*

*The other driver was charged with driving under the **influence** of alcohol.*

under anaesthetic under hypnosis under sedation

under the influence (of...)

14 THE 'COVER' GROUP

These nouns refer to things that provide shelter or protection.

*Most of the nights in Africa and Asia are spent under **canvas**, in two-person tents.*

*Both the stage and the seating are under **cover** to guard against the unpredictable English summer weather.*

under canvas under cover under glass

15 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

*Under these **circumstances** shared parenting arrangements can be harmful to the child.*

*The Labor Department report indicates that inflation remains under **control**.*

*I was under no **obligation** to give them anything.*

*When ordered to place three British divisions astride the Somme, Haig complied, but only under **protest**.*

*I had not been long in Los Angeles before I fell under the **spell** of the Kennedy magic.*

under control 14 under protest under treatment (for...)
under cover of ... under sail

under the impact of ... under a/no obligation (to...) under my spell/under the spell of ...

under ... circumstances under ... conditions

73 with N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *with*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In most cases, however, there is no determiner.

with	Noun group
with	dismay
with	great intensity
with	a sigh

This pattern is very productive. For many of the meaning groups below, other nouns sometimes occur with this pattern. The nouns listed here are the ones which are most frequently used in this way.

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'AMUSEMENT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'APLOMB' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SPEED' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CARE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'SKILL' GROUP
- 6 THE 'SMILE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'HELP' GROUP
- 8 THE 'AIM' GROUP
- 9 THE 'JUSTIFICATION' GROUP
- 10 THE 'REGARD' GROUP
- 11 THE 'PRACTICE' GROUP
- 12 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'AMUSEMENT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a feeling that someone has when they do something.

Some are used with a variety of verbs.

*Father O'Brian watched with **amusement**.*

*'Two more years,' she said with **disgust**.*

*With some **embarrassment** I did as he requested.*

*Some knowledge of the past will help you to face the present and future with **equanimity**.*

*He recounted with **glee** how, after one exam, he had thrown all his useless school manuals into the river.*

*Then Martina realised with **horror** that the sound was coming from her own kitchen.*

*Researchers greeted the proposal with **scorn**.*

*It was with a **sense** of relief that Mark Ryle watched the jet as it taxied to the runway, lined up and took off into the night sky.*

*She waited with **trepidation** for her father's first visit.*

with admiration	with bitterness	with disgust
with affection	with certainty	with dismay
with alarm	with compassion	with dread
with amazement	with concern	with enthusiasm
with amusement	with confidence	with envy
with annoyance	with contempt	with equanimity
with anticipation	with curiosity	with fascination
with anxiety	with delight	with fervour
with apprehension	with despair	with glee
with approval	with disappointment	with gratitude
with assurance	with disapproval	with horror
with astonishment	with disbelief	with incredulity
with awe	with disfavour	with interest

with irritation	with regret	with subtlety
with longing	with relief	with surprise
with love	with relish	with suspicion
with nostalgia	with reluctance	with sympathy
with outrage	with resignation	with trepidation
with passion	with reverence	with triumph
with patience	with sadness	with warmth
with pleasure	with satisfaction	with zest
with pride	with scorn	

with a feeling of ... with a sense of ... with a shock

with ... embarrassment with ... excitement with ... fury

The nouns in the list below are used with this pattern only after verbs indicating a physical reaction such as *shake* or *weep*, or after adjectives indicating a physical state such as *dizzy* or *sick*. Many of the nouns from the previous lists are also sometimes used in this way.

I felt sick with fear.

Actor Dudley Moore wept with joy last night when he became a dad again – at 60.

Brears saw red; he was literally shaking with rage.

She was dizzy with shock when she realized she was pregnant.

with anger	with grief	with nerves	with tension
with emotion	with guilt	with pain	with terror
with exhaustion	with happiness	with panic	with tiredness
with fear	with indignation	with rage	with worry
with fright	with jealousy	with remorse	
with frustration	with joy	with shock	

There are a few nouns which are used with only one or two verbs. *Mistrust* and *scepticism* are usually used with the verbs *regard* or *view*.

Unusual projects tend to be viewed with scepticism.

Disdain, disrespect, and respect are usually used with the verb *treat*.

We should treat our kids with respect – and as a society we don't, I'm afraid.

Fondness and shame are usually used with the verb *remember*.

There were two people in particular whom he remembered with fondness and whose deaths had caused him sadness.

with disdain	with mistrust	with shame
with disrespect	with respect	
with fondness	with scepticism	

2 THE 'APLOMB' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating the manner of an action. Most of them refer to good qualities.

He was a capable, experienced forensic clinician, and he handled their questions with aplomb.

Borlov listened with great concentration, as if he were extremely interested.

With an effort I tore my glance away – and realised that we were not alone.

Robert is eating with gusto and saying that this food is so much better than what they usually get.

She grabbed Mick's arm and twisted with all her might.

They buy simple garments of good cut and quality, and wear them with style.

with abandon	with courtesy	with grace	with panache
with aplomb	with dignity	with gusto	with spirit
with asperity	with emphasis	with honour	with style
with authority	with feeling	with humour	with verve
with clarity	with flair	with imagination	with vigour
with courage	with fortitude	with irony	

with an effort with a will

with ... attention	with ... effort	with ... intensity
with ... concentration	with ... energy	with ... seriousness
with ... efficiency	with ... force	with ... tenacity

with all my might

3 THE 'SPEED' GROUP

These nouns refer to the speed with which someone does something or something happens.

I accepted the offer with alacrity.

The basic institutions of a market economy have appeared with astonishing speed.

with alacrity with dispatch

with ... hesitation	with ... speed
with ... rapidity	with ... urgency

4 THE 'CARE' GROUP

These nouns refer to carefulness.

Choose your job with care if you want to reduce stress.

Bruce refilled his pipe with infuriating deliberation.

These issues need to be addressed with sensitivity.

with care	with deliberation	with tact
with caution	with delicacy	
with circumspection	with sensitivity	

5 THE 'SKILL' GROUP

These nouns refer to the skill with which something is done.

He handled foreign affairs **with skill** – in particular during the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the ending of the Cold War.

with accuracy 2 with precision with skill

6 THE 'SMILE' GROUP

These nouns refer to the expression, movement, or sound of someone as they say or do something.

She turned towards him **with a look of concern**.

'It probably won't happen now,' he admits **with a shrug**.

'I'm glad to hear you say that,' she said **with a smile**.

with a chuckle with a grin with a shrug with a wink
with a giggle with a laugh with a sigh
with a grimace with a look of ... with a smile

7 THE 'HELP' GROUP

These nouns refer to help or support.

With the help of her employers, she put together a CV and sent out hundreds of copies in the hope of gaining a good job.

I would be quite happy for children to watch my films **with their parents' permission**.

Their role will be to deal with the specialist shops, **with support from the parent company**, and to generate sales.

with the aid of ...
with the connivance of .../with ... connivance
with the help of .../with ... help
with the permission of .../with my permission
with the support of .../with ... support

with help from ... with support from ...

8 THE 'AIM' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating what someone wants or expects to happen.

Towards the end of the decade, though, Welsh quit that lifestyle and returned home **with the aim of getting a haircut and a proper job**.

He's also accused of possessing a firearm **with intent to endanger life**.

I don't think anyone should buy a property like this **with a view to making money**.

with intent to ...

with the aim of ... with the promise of ... with the prospect of ...

with an eye to ... with a view to ...

with ... hope of ...

9 THE 'JUSTIFICATION' GROUP

These nouns are used to say that someone is right to say or think something.

You may tell the world, and **with justification**, that you are the most successful actor Hollywood has.

Indurain claims, **with some truth**, that success has not changed him.

with accuracy 1 with justification
with justice 2 with reason 2

with ... truth

10 THE 'REGARD' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating what something is connected with.

We need more details, particularly **with regard to the television contract**.

with reference to ... with regard to ... with respect to ...

11 THE 'PRACTICE' GROUP

These nouns are used when saying that something will happen eventually.

You'll get better **with practice**.

with patience with practice with time

12 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

Slowly and **with difficulty**, she washed and dressed.

Lord Owen, CH, has been elected Chancellor of the University of Liverpool **with effect from January 1**.

With one exception, all the films here are American made.

Between 1974 and 1979 they saw each other **with increasing frequency**.

With hindsight I can see it was a mistake.

With luck he'll be fit for Thursday but, if the match was today, he would have no chance.

'**With respect**, sir,' Tyler said, 'that wasn't quite the point I was trying to make.'

You may strike the ball too firmly, **with the result that the ball runs way past the hole**.

Her offer invariably was declined **with thanks**.

with difficulty with effect from ... with luck with success
with distinction with hindsight with regularity with thanks
with ease with impunity with respect 3

with the exception of .../with one exception with the result that .../with ... results

with ... ceremony 2 with ... emphasis on ... with ... frequency

Productive uses

- 1 A large number of nouns are used with this pattern after another noun as a way of describing someone or something. If the noun in this pattern is a singular count noun, the noun group begins with a determiner as in *a car with a broken windscreen*. If the noun is an uncount noun or a plural noun, the noun group does not begin with a determiner, as in *girls with long hair*, *players with talent*, and *people with disabilities*.
- 2 Prepositional phrases beginning with *with* are used to indicate what is used to do something, as in *Cut it with a sharp knife*.

74 within N

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *within*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In most cases, however, there is no determiner.

within	Noun group
within	days
within	my grasp
within	reason

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'MONTHS' GROUP
- 2 THE 'INCHES' GROUP
- 3 THE 'EARSHOT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'LIMITS' GROUP
- 5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'MONTHS' GROUP

These nouns refer to a period of time. They are used to indicate that something happens a relatively short time after something else.

*The pen nib deteriorates very quickly and I've often thrown them away **within days**.*

*Graham was awake **within seconds** of the telephone ringing.*

The noun sometimes follows a number or a determiner such as *a few*.

*Only a quarter of women returned to work **within nine months** of giving birth.*

If the noun follows *one* or *a* it is used in the singular.

*The last years of her life were as hard as the early ones, and she died, alone in France. **Within a year** one of her sons also died in India.*

within (...) days (of...)	within (...) minutes (of...)	within (...) seconds (of...)
within (...) decades	within (...) moments (of...)	within (...) weeks (of...)
within (...) hours (of...)	within (...) months (of...)	within (...) years (of...)

2 THE 'INCHES' GROUP

These nouns refer to units of measurement. They are used to indicate that someone or something is relatively close to someone or something else.

*Zlotin dropped the pistol and, using the side of his foot, swept it across the floor to **within inches** of Graham's feet.*

The noun sometimes follows a number or a determiner such as *a few*.

*Her parents, her younger sister Anita and her grandparents live **within a few miles** of each other.*

If the noun follows *one* or *a* it is used in the singular.

*A grey squirrel scuttled up a tree trunk **within a yard** of him.*

The noun *inches* is sometimes used to indicate that someone almost does something.

*A spokesperson for his office says: 'We are **within inches** of getting something done.'*

within ... feet of ...	within ... metres of ...	within ... yards of ...
within ... inches of ...	within ... miles of ...	

3 THE 'EARSHOT' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone or something is close enough to be heard or seen by someone, or reached by someone or something. We include here *grasp*, which is usually used metaphorically to indicate that something can be achieved. *Range* and *reach* are also sometimes used metaphorically.

*It is my own custom to wait at the side of the road, listening carefully until I am absolutely certain that no traffic is **within earshot** and then I cross at a brisk pace.*

*Preventing some forms of cancer, too, is now **within our grasp**.*

*The town is already **within our artillery range**.*

*Prints by prominent artists are **within the reach** of the average pocket.*

within earshot (of...)	within range (of...)	within sight (of...)
within hearing (of...)	within reach (of...)	

within my grasp/within the grasp of ...	within ... reach/within (the) reach of ...
within ... range/within (the) range of ...	

4 THE 'LIMITS' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that there are restrictions on how or to what extent something may be done.

*Political parties and the media operate **within carefully defined limits**.*

*A novel can be any length you like **within reason** or you can split it up into several novels if it really gets very long.*

within bounds	within limits	within reason
---------------	---------------	---------------

within ... bounds/within the bounds of ...
within ... limits/within the limits of ...

5 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are two other nouns which have this pattern.

*Attempts were being made by at least some Queensland hospitals to work **within budget**.*

*Note how the writer uses references **within parentheses** to provide support for his conclusions.*

within budget within parentheses

75 **without N**

The noun comes in a noun group after the preposition *without*. In some cases, the noun group begins with a determiner. In most cases, however, there is no determiner.

without	Noun group
without	assistance
without	complaint
without	a permit

Nouns with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'PROTEST' GROUP
- 2 THE 'EMOTION' GROUP
- 3 THE 'HINT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'PERMISSION' GROUP
- 5 THE 'HELP' GROUP
- 6 THE 'DELAY' GROUP
- 7 THE 'HITCH' GROUP
- 8 THE 'WARNING' GROUP
- 9 THE 'RISK' GROUP
- 10 THE 'MERIT' GROUP
- 11 THE 'RESERVATION' GROUP
- 12 THE 'DOUBT' GROUP
- 13 THE 'JUSTIFICATION' GROUP
- 14 THE 'REFERENCE' GROUP
- 15 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'PROTEST' GROUP

These nouns are used when indicating that someone does not say anything or does not make any objection.

*Mr Adams left **without comment**.*

*His three elder children went to church every Sunday **without protest** and were, on the whole, well-behaved.*

*But she certainly wouldn't have given him up **without a struggle**.*

without comment without explanation without protest
without complaint without fuss
without demur without preamble

without a fight without a sound without a word
without a murmur without a struggle

2 THE 'EMOTION' GROUP

These nouns refer to thoughts or feelings.

*In a speech, Mr Lukoji called for proceedings to be conducted peacefully and **without bitterness**.*

*'I was very disappointed,' she says, **without emotion**.*

*We entrusted our safety to him **without a qualm**.*

without bitterness without enthusiasm without interest
without compunction without fear of ... without irony
without embarrassment without guilt without malice
without emotion without hope without shame

without a care without a sense of ...
without a qualm without a thought (for ...)

3 THE 'HINT' GROUP

These nouns are used when emphasizing that someone or something does not have or show a particular quality.

***Without a hint** of shame, he formally announced his candidacy last week against the backdrop of the Statue of Liberty.*

without a flicker of ... without a shred of ... without a trace of ...
without a hint of ... without a sign of ...

4 THE 'PERMISSION' GROUP

These nouns refer to verbal or written permission.

*Not even a phone call can be made **without my approval**.*

*Further rules introduced by George III state that no royal marriage can take place **without the consent of the sovereign**.*

*Now Brown faces charges for driving **without a licence**.*

*It was made absolutely clear to the children involved that they could not leave the room **without permission**.*

without consent without permission
without leave without prescription

without a licence without a prescription without a warrant
without a mandate without a ticket
without a permit without a visa

without my **agreement**/without the agreement of ...
 without my **approval**/without the approval of ...
 without my **consent**/without the consent of ...
 without my **knowledge**/without the knowledge of ...
 without my **permission**/without the permission of ...

5 THE 'HELP' GROUP

These nouns refer to help or interference.

*He always climbed alone, **without the aid** of a rope.*

*I don't know if we could have survived **without their help**.*

*Nature can look after itself **without interference** from us.*

without the **aid** of ...
 without the **assistance** of .../without my assistance
 without the **backing** of .../without my backing
 without the **benefit** of ...
 without the **help** of .../without my help
 without the **intervention** of .../without my intervention
 without the **participation** of .../without my participation
 without the **protection** of ...
 without the **support** of .../without my support

without **assistance** without **help** without **interruption**
 without **benefit** of ... without **interference** (from ...) without **support**

6 THE 'DELAY' GROUP

These nouns are used when emphasizing that something happens immediately.

*Never put up with persisting pain. See a doctor **without delay**.*

*'However,' he continued **without a pause**, 'first, tell me something.'*

without **delay** without **hesitation**

without **a pause**

without **further/more ado**

7 THE 'HITCH' GROUP

These nouns refer to a problem in the course of something.

*Apart from the initial problem, the entire campaign went **without a hitch**.*

*The ceremony passed off **without incident**.*

without **incident** without **problems**

without **a hiccup** without **a hitch**

8 THE 'WARNING' GROUP

These nouns refer to information or arrangements about something that is going to happen.

*Local people say the police opened fire **without warning**.*

without **consultation** without **notice** without **warning**

without **an appointment**

9 THE 'RISK' GROUP

These nouns refer to the possibility of something bad happening. We include here possibility, where what might happen may be bad or good.

*Profits like this are never earned **without risk**.*

*The sanctions would have no impact **without the threat** of force.*

without **danger** without **difficulty** without **risk** (of/to ...)

without the **possibility** of ... without the **risk** of ... without the **threat** of ...

10 THE 'MERIT' GROUP

These nouns refer to a quality.

*The hereditary principle is **without merit**.*

With **controversy**, **humour**, **influence**, **interest**, and **significance**, the preposition **without** is always or usually preceded by **not**.

*But the move is **not without controversy**.*

without **controversy** without **interest** without **significance**
 without **humour** without **meaning** without **substance**
 without **influence** without **merit**

11 THE 'RESERVATION' GROUP

These nouns are used when emphasizing the strength of something someone says, thinks, or feels.

*He accepted the adjudication **without reservation**.*

without **equivocation** without **qualification** without **reservation**

12 THE 'DOUBT' GROUP

These nouns are used to emphasize a statement you are making.

*As managing director of Carlton Communications, he is **without a doubt** the most powerful man in commercial television.*

***Without question** it is unique.*

without doubt without exception without question

without a doubt

13 THE 'JUSTIFICATION' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone does something without having a motive or justification.

*You cannot go round killing people without **justification**.*

without justification without precedent
without obligation without reason

14 THE 'REFERENCE' GROUP

These nouns are used to indicate that someone does not do, use, or consider something.

*We have to be able to achieve our ends **without recourse** to violence or manipulation if we are to be part of a community.*

*Although the story can be read **without reference** to the notes, only a knowledgeable reader would fully appreciate it.*

without recourse to ... without regard to ...
without reference to ... without resort to ...

without a backward/second glance

15 NOUNS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other nouns which have this pattern.

*Kimberlin was taken to a solitary-confinement cell **without access** to a phone.*

*Khalid was buried **without ceremony** with only a few family members present.*

*A toddler hurled through a windscreen in a triple car smash escaped **without a scratch**.*

*He had heard stories of hospital staff disappearing **without trace**.*

without access to ... without foundation without success
without anaesthetic without parallel without trace
without ceremony 3 without prejudice 4 to ... without trial

without the presence of ... without the pressure of ...

without a break without a scratch without a trial
without a hearing without a trace

Productive uses

- 1 A large number of nouns are used with this pattern to indicate that someone or something lacks something, as in *people without jobs*, *a frying pan without a handle*, or *Thousands of people are without electricity*.
- 2 A large number of nouns are used with this pattern to indicate that something does not happen, as in *firing thousands of people without compensation*, *Staff were left without supervision*, or *wheat grown without the use of artificial fertilizers*.

Adjectives

76 Graded and ungraded adjectives

This section contains the following:

- 1 Graded adjectives
- 2 Grading adverbs
- 3 Patterns of graded adjectives
- 4 Ungraded adjectives
- 5 Adjectives with both graded and ungraded senses

1 Graded adjectives

A graded adjective is one that is sometimes modified in terms of more and less, in order to indicate the degree to which the quality is present. For example, we say something is very interesting or fairly simple. Graded adjectives are sometimes used to compare two or more things. For example, we say that one thing is bigger than another or as big as another, or that something is the best in a group.

Some graded adjectives are fairly frequently found with a **grading adverb** or in a **comparative** or **superlative** form. Other graded adjectives are only occasionally graded. We have chosen examples, below, which show the adjectives when they are graded or in a comparative or superlative form, and the grading adverb, when it occurs, is shown as part of the pattern of the adjective.

Graded adjectives have many meanings, but the most frequent graded adjectives belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1.1 THE 'BIG', 'QUICK', AND 'OLD' GROUP
- 1.2 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP
- 1.3 THE 'INTELLIGENT' GROUP
- 1.4 THE 'RICH' GROUP
- 1.5 THE 'AWARE' GROUP
- 1.6 THE 'CLEAN' GROUP
- 1.7 THE 'DIFFICULT' AND 'EASY' GROUP
- 1.8 THE 'AWFUL' AND 'SUPERB' GROUP
- 1.9 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP
- 1.10 THE 'NORMAL' AND 'ODD' GROUP
- 1.11 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 1.12 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP
- 1.13 THE 'NEAR' AND 'REMOTE' GROUP
- 1.14 THE 'CHEAP' AND 'PEACEFUL' GROUP

In the lists below we show only some of the most frequent adjectives which have at least one graded sense. Many have other senses than the ones indicated here. Many of them also have ungraded senses (see Part 5 below).

1.1 THE 'BIG', 'QUICK', AND 'OLD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate the size, speed, age, or weight of something.

*The **biggest** problem now is water; there are no water supplies on the mountain.*

*When San Francisco suffered a fairly **minor** earthquake by world standards, large parts of the phone system carried on working.*

*Their attitudes towards **older** people remained highly negative.*

*Brocklebank is as **quick** as everyone else she has worked with to emphasise her professionalism, sense of humour and team-spirit.*

ancient	fat	minor	slow
big	heavy	narrow	small
brief	high	new	substantial
broad	huge	numerous	tall
considerable	large	old	thick
deep	late	quick	thin
early	light	rapid	tiny
elderly	little	serious	vast
enormous	long	severe	wide
extensive	low	short	young
fast	massive	slight	

1.2 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has a particular feeling or attitude, such as fear, anger, or happiness.

*He was so **afraid** to make a wrong move that he didn't move at all.*

*He gets **more angry** more quickly than anyone else I know.*

*I'm 53 and I'm **very happy**.*

afraid	desperate	nervous	sad
angry	glad	positive	sorry
anxious	happy	proud	unhappy
bitter	keen	ready	willing
comfortable	negative	reluctant	worried

1.3 THE 'INTELLIGENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a quality that a person has, such as beauty, intelligence, courage, or generosity.

*She has the **most beautiful** green eyes.*

*I was **very confident**, but very calm.*

*He was **incredibly generous** with his money.*

*I find these dogs are **extremely intelligent**, but you do have to stay one step ahead of them.*

*She has two small boys who are as **mad** as monkeys.*

*It's taken me 42 years to be able to admit that I'm a **deeply sensitive** person.*

able	cool	honest	sensitive
active	crazy	hostile	serious
aggressive	creative	independent	silly
attractive	curious	intelligent	smart
beautiful	decent	liberal	sophisticated
brave	direct	mad	strict
bright	efficient	modest	strong
brilliant	emotional	moral	stupid
capable	fair	musical	sweet
careful	fierce	pretty	tough
clever	friendly	professional	violent
competitive	generous	reasonable	warm
confident	gentle	responsible	weak
conservative	genuine	romantic	wild
conventional	helpful	sensible	wise

1.4 THE 'RICH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is in a particular situation.

People are getting **busier** and **busier** these days with their work and they appreciate someone taking extra care of them.

If you were **very rich** you had to pay the full fees.

All children and their parents are **very welcome** to come along and meet Father Christmas in his enchanted place.

busy	lucky	rich	welcome
famous	poor	sick	
healthy	popular	successful	
ill	powerful	vulnerable	

1.5 THE 'AWARE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has knowledge of something.

I am **very aware** of the responsibilities of bringing up children.

aware	clear	conscious
certain	confident	sure

1.6 THE 'CLEAN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has a particular physical shape or quality, or that it looks, tastes, or feels a particular way.

Japanica fruit is not poisonous but I should think it probably tastes **rather bitter**.

The factory is **very clean**.

He said 'hello' in a **very quiet** voice.

The lawns are **as smooth** as the green baize of a billiard table, and there are a variety of interesting trees, plants and flowers.

The weather on Sunday was **unusually warm** for this time of year.

People suffer dreadful spinal injuries in crashes because the roof structures of many cars are **too weak**.

bitter	firm	quiet	straight
bright	flat	raw	strong
brilliant	fresh	rough	sweet
clean	full	sharp	tight
cold	hard	silent	tough
cool	hot	smooth	visible
dark	loose	soft	warm
dirty	loud	solid	weak
dry	pale	stable	wet
empty	pure	steady	

1.7 THE 'DIFFICULT' AND 'EASY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is difficult or dangerous, or the opposite.

The water was heated by a naked gas flame beneath the bath tub – a system far too **dangerous** to last.

It is **extremely difficult** to find anyone with an unkind word for Cook.

Your cat's needs are normally **quite easy** to understand.

dangerous	easy	safe
difficult	hard	simple

1.8 THE 'AWFUL' AND 'SUPERB' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is judged to be good or bad. Adjectives such as *perfect*, *superb*, and *tremendous*, which indicate that something is extremely good, are not graded with adverbs such as *fairly* or *very*, but they are graded with adverbs such as *really* or *as*. Adjectives such as *awful* and *terrible*, which indicate that something is extremely bad, are not graded with adverbs such as *very*, though they are graded with adverbs such as *fairly*.

His behaviour could be **fairly awful**.

Watershed moments in history are not **particularly pleasant** to live through.

The quality of the Russian State Orchestra is **as superb** as ever.

There's something **terribly wrong**, we've got no doubts about that.

acceptable	good	pleasant	true
appropriate	grand	right	useful
awful	great	sound	valuable
bad	lovely	suitable	wonderful
correct	nice	superb	wrong
effective	outstanding	terrible	
fine	perfect	tremendous	

1.9 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something has a quality which produces a particular feeling in someone. For example, if something is *interesting*, someone feels interested in it.

It's just **really amazing** some of the things we've had to put up with.

There are **very interesting** people in this community.

This is all **very painful** for me.

amazing	familiar	interesting	surprising
curious	fun	painful	
exciting	funny	remarkable	
extraordinary	impressive	spectacular	

1.10 THE 'NORMAL' AND 'ODD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is the same as other people or things or the same as what is expected, or that they are different. We include here *common* and *widespread*, which indicate that something is often found, and *rare*, which indicates that something is not often found.

It usually starts off as a **fairly normal** dream – the normal kind of dream you have every night.

The **rather odd** combination of ingredients in this sandwich is quite remarkable.

common	odd	special	unusual
different	ordinary	strange	usual
funny	rare	typical	widespread
normal	similar	unexpected	

1.11 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important or relevant, or not important or relevant.

*This is the most **essential** of all skincare treatments, helping to keep your skin supple by preventing moisture loss.*

*It's very **important** to have the open meetings regularly.*

critical	fundamental	necessary	serious
crucial	important	prominent	significant
essential	minor	relevant	vital

1.12 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is certain, obvious, or unlikely.

*What is more **obvious** now is that terrorism is not and never has been one thing.*

certain	likely	plain	sure
clear	obvious	possible	unlikely

1.13 THE 'NEAR' AND 'REMOTE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone is near or far away, physically or metaphorically.

*Some people develop a **closer** relationship with their pets than with people.*

*I have come across lost purses on two separate occasions, and have handed them in to the **nearest** police station.*

*The idea that childhoods may not be as good as they used to be is a fairly **recent** one.*

*The report said that while popular city and tourist beaches were patrolled, many drownings occurred at more **remote** beaches.*

close	local	remote
distant	near	
far	recent	

1.14 THE 'CHEAP' AND 'PEACEFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a range of non-physical qualities that something may have.

*I'd rather go to the small towns 'cos it's a lot **cheaper**.*

*For all the turbulent history, this is a **remarkably peaceful** place, deserted on the day we were there.*

*Could you just be a bit more **specific** about how your job's organized?*

accurate	controversial	peaceful	secret
cheap	conventional	practical	simple
comfortable	expensive	private	specific
complex	formal	reasonable	sudden

2 Grading adverbs

Some adverbs which modify adjectives are **grading adverbs** and indicate that the adjective is a **graded adjective**. They are also known as **adverbs of degree**. We show below some examples of adverbs of this kind. They belong to the following meaning groups:

- 2.1 THE 'MORE' AND 'LESS' GROUP
- 2.2 THE 'FAIRLY' AND 'EXTREMELY' GROUP
- 2.3 THE 'PARTICULARLY' GROUP
- 2.4 THE 'SURPRISINGLY' GROUP
- 2.5 THE 'DANGEROUSLY' AND 'TOLERABLY' GROUP
- 2.6 THE 'BREATHTAKINGLY' GROUP

2.1 THE 'MORE' AND 'LESS' GROUP

These adverbs indicate that someone or something has more or less of a quality compared with someone or something else, or compared with what they used to be like.

as	increasingly	more
comparatively	least	most
equally	less	relatively

2.2 THE 'FAIRLY' AND 'EXTREMELY' GROUP

These adverbs indicate that someone or something has a lot or a little of a quality.

a bit	highly	moderately	somewhat
a little	hugely	pretty	such
awfully	immensely	quite	supremely
deeply	infinitely	rather	surpassingly
desperately	infinitesimally	real	terribly
exceedingly	intensely	really	(not) that
extremely	jolly	reasonably	truly
faintly	mighty	slightly	vaguely
fairly	mildly	so	very

2.3 THE 'PARTICULARLY' GROUP

These adverbs indicate that someone or something has a quality to an unusual degree.

abnormally	extraordinarily	peculiarly	unusually
especially	outstandingly	specially	
exceptionally	particularly	uncommonly	

2.4 THE 'SURPRISINGLY' GROUP

These adverbs indicate that someone or something has a quality to a surprising degree.

amazingly	improbably	remarkably	unbelievably
astonishingly	incredibly	startlingly	unexpectedly
extraordinarily	noticeably	surprisingly	unnaturally

2.5 THE 'DANGEROUSLY' AND 'TOLERABLY' GROUP

These adverbs indicate that someone or something has a quality to a degree that is judged to be good or bad.

acceptably	horrendously	painfully	unrealistically
amply	impeccably	sufficiently	unreasonably
dangerously	impossibly	tolerably	wonderfully
excessively	infernally	too	
fearfully	notoriously	unacceptably	
grossly	outrageously	unnecessarily	

2.6 THE 'BREATH TAKINGLY' GROUP

These adverbs indicate that someone or something has a quality to a degree which makes someone react in a particular way.

achingly	devastatingly	infuriatingly	strikingly
alarmingly	disappointingly	irresistibly	stunningly
breath-takingly	disconcertingly	overwhelmingly	terrifyingly
chillingly	grippingly	ravishingly	worryingly
dazzlingly	inexpressibly	staggeringly	

Adverbs that do not grade

There are other adverbs which modify adjectives, and indicate the extent to which the adjective is true, but which are not grading adverbs. These adverbs are used with both graded and ungraded adjectives; an adjective which is modified by one of these adverbs is not necessarily graded.

absolutely	fully	partially	totally
almost	largely	partly	truly
completely	mainly	perfectly	utterly
entirely	nearly	quite	virtually

3 Patterns of graded adjectives

Graded adjectives have the following patterns.

- Pattern 1: adv ADJ
- Pattern 2: adv ADJ n
- Pattern 3: as ADJ as n/-ing
- Pattern 4: as ADJ as adj/adv
- Pattern 5: as ADJ as num/amount
- Pattern 6: as ADJ as cl
- Pattern 7: ADJ enough
- Pattern 8: ADJ enough to-inf
- Pattern 9: ADJ enough for n
- Pattern 10: ADJ enough for n to-inf
- Pattern 11: ADJ enough that
- Pattern 12: ADJ enough n
- Pattern 13: ADJ enough n to-inf
- Pattern 14: ADJ enough n for n
- Pattern 15: ADJ enough n for n to-inf
- Pattern 16: ADJ enough n that
- Pattern 17: how ADJ
- Pattern 18: how ADJ v-link n
- Pattern 19: how ADJ n v-link

- Pattern 20: how ADJ it v-link that
- Pattern 21: how ADJ it v-link to-inf
- Pattern 22: how ADJ cl
- Pattern 23: how ADJ a n cl
- Pattern 24: however ADJ
- Pattern 25: however ADJ n
- Pattern 26: however ADJ n v-link
- Pattern 27: so ADJ that
- Pattern 28: so ADJ as to inf
- Pattern 29: such a ADJ n that, such ADJ n that
- Pattern 30: too ADJ to-inf
- Pattern 31: too ADJ for n
- Pattern 32: too ADJ for n to-inf

Pattern 1: adv ADJ

The adjective follows a **grading adverb**. For lists of grading adverbs, see Part 2 above.

*The city remained comparatively **calm**, but few of its residents were deceived.*

*Her fingers had become infuriatingly **clumsy**; she kept dropping hairpins and brushes.*

*The reality of cottage-buying is rather **different**.*

*The village school is uncommonly **prosperous**.*

Pattern 2: adv ADJ n

The adjective follows a **grading adverb** and is followed by a noun.

*Some analysts dismiss the growing popularity of Western appliances among increasingly **affluent Japanese consumers** as a fad.*

*You were a very **good swimmer** in high school.*

*But historically Poland has been a fairly **large nation**, in European terms.*

*Ethnic radio is still a relatively **new concept** in Britain.*

*She has had a remarkably **successful career** since first appearing in A Handful Of Stars in London at 16.*

Pattern 3: as ADJ as n/-ing

The adjective follows **as** and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of **as** and a noun group or '-ing' clause. This pattern is used to compare two people or things.

*Erosion has sculpted massive stone pillars and great arches of rock as **big as cathedrals**.*

*To allow this newspaper into your home is about as **commendable as mixing rat-poison into your kiddies' milkshakes**.*

*Unfortunately, the new proposals look as **dismal as the old**.*

*Our methane reserves are not as **extensive as our buried coal** but are more plentiful than oil.*

*For us, writing is unproblematic and unreflective, as **normal as breathing**.*

*I'm sure your hands were as **soft as mine** once.*

*Today's little girls want to be just as **strong as boys**.*

*This room overlooks a 300-year-old sycamore tree as **tall as two double-decker buses**.*

Some fixed expressions have this pattern. They are used to indicate that someone or something has a lot of a quality. For example, *It is as old as the hills* indicates that it is very old.

*It may be 100 years old, but it still looks as **fresh** as a daisy.*

*That idea is as **old** as the hills.*

Many of these fixed expressions are also found in the pattern **ADJ as n**.

*It was **clear** as day to him.*

The preposition **as** is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **as ADJ as n-ing**.

*The water system could have been disturbed by something as **innocuous** as a strong wind stroking the surface.*

Pattern 4: as ADJ as adj/adv

The adjective follows **as** and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of **as** and an adjective (usually *possible*) or adverb (usually *always* or *ever*). This pattern is used to indicate that someone or something has a lot of a quality. For example, *She was as beautiful as ever* indicates that she was very beautiful.

*She was now twenty-eight, as **beautiful** as ever and very much wiser.*

*The diet is based on 1000 calories a day, with no added salt or artificial sweeteners used, and everything served as **fresh** as possible.*

Pattern 5: as ADJ as num/amount

The adjective follows **as** and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of **as** and a number or **amount**. This pattern occurs with adjectives indicating age, size, and level, and is used to emphasize that you are talking about a very low or high figure.

*Polls suggest turnout may be as **low** as 60 per cent.*

*They have often learnt violent and anti-social behaviour as **young** as three or four.*

Pattern 6: as ADJ as cl

The adjective follows **as** and is followed by **as** and a **finite clause**. This pattern is used to compare two people or things, or to compare someone or something with a former situation or a possible situation.

*His feelings are not as **abnormal** as they appear.*

*He's not as **dumb** as he acts.*

*The unions are not as **popular** as they once were.*

*He needs an independent woman who's as **tough** as he is.*

Sometimes this pattern is used to indicate that someone or something has a lot of a quality. For example, *as happy as a girl can be* means roughly the same as *extremely happy*.

*Pass me some of that there cornbread, and I'll be as **happy** as a girl can be.*

The finite clause sometimes includes an adjective. In this case the pattern is used to compare how much of two qualities someone or something has.

*A workout in the gym builds a body that is as **powerful** as it is beautiful.*

Pattern 7: ADJ enough

The adjective is followed by the adverb **enough**.

Enough sometimes means 'sufficient', particularly in a clause beginning with *if* or *unless*.

*A flow of heat is a flow of energy, and can in principle be made to do useful work, if we are **clever enough**.*

*I was **fit enough** and felt I needed a new challenge.*

*If you are **rich enough**, or know a trick or two, you can always get round the restrictions.*

Enough sometimes means 'fairly', particularly when the adjective indicates a positive quality. The clause with this pattern is often followed by a clause beginning with *but*.

*She seemed **bright enough**, but I noticed she was restless.*

*It was **easy enough** to wish for the death of a stranger.*

*Slapstick comedy is **harmless enough** but rather short on laughs.*

Enough sometimes means 'very', particularly when the adjective indicates a negative quality.

*The pain was **bad enough** during the day, but at night it became intolerable.*

*As if life weren't **complex enough**, he also witnesses a murder.*

*He'd been short and uncivil with her, but it was **difficult enough** coping with his own problems at the moment, let alone hers.*

*It's **plain enough** that you're not exactly excited about our date tonight.*

Pattern 8: ADJ enough to-inf

The adjective is followed by **enough** and a **to-infinitive clause**. The to-infinitive clause refers to an action that is possible.

In some cases, the action is performed by the person or thing that is the Subject of the link verb.

*Is it likely that she will be **alert enough** to keep an energetic and inquiring child out of danger?*

*She was **angry enough** at Aurora to want to set ground rules.*

*On the fourteenth day, they found that the pass was **free enough** of snow to be passable, and they entered Tibetan territory.*

*Before my 21-year-old son was **old enough** to get his driver's license, I taught him the rules of the road.*

*The steel is **thick enough** not to corrode and therefore it never needs painting.*

In other cases, the action can be performed by anyone.

*The nectarines should be **ripe enough** to eat with a spoon.*

*The city is **small enough** to explore on foot.*

Pattern 9: ADJ enough for n

The adjective is followed by **enough** and a prepositional phrase which consists of **for** and a noun group.

Sometimes the noun group following **for** indicates a person or thing for whom something is acceptable or suitable.

*The way English and other subjects were taught was not **attractive enough** for the students.*

*The room inside was about seven feet square, harshly lit and just **big enough** for a chair and a high padded couch.*

Sometimes the noun group indicates something that can happen or that someone can take part in.

*Holland was told to come back later when he was **old enough** for military service.*

The reclaimed land is not **stable enough** for development.

Pattern 10: ADJ *enough* for n to-inf

The adjective is followed by *enough*, a prepositional phrase which consists of *for* and a noun group, and a to-infinitive clause.

Sometimes the words after *enough* indicate an event that is possible.

The water west of them is **calm enough** for salmon hatcheries to have been established there.

Sometimes they indicate what can be done by someone with the person or thing already referred to.

The barbed wire was so closely woven that no space was **big enough** for a man to get his head through without damaging himself.

The industry never reached the mass-production level which would have made the planes **cheap enough** for enough people to buy.

Pattern 11: ADJ *enough* that

The adjective is followed by *enough* and a that-clause. This pattern is less frequent than ADJ *enough* to-inf (see Pattern 8 above). The that-clause indicates a consequence.

It's **cold enough** that some of those showers will turn to snow at times on the tops of the higher hills.

The captain was **frightened enough** that he took the route of least resistance.

The President had reservations – not strong enough to make him stop, just **strong enough** that he needed to be prodded on a regular basis.

Pattern 12: ADJ *enough* n

The adjective is followed by the adverb *enough*. They are followed by a noun.

As in the pattern ADJ *enough* (see Pattern 7 above), *enough* has three meanings. Sometimes it means 'sufficient'.

Unless you do a **large enough** area, it's not going to be cost-effective for the district.

Sometimes it means 'fairly'.

On a nice summer evening the battlements were a **pleasant enough** place and had the advantage of a good view over the bridge.

Sometimes it means 'very'.

The new regulations on tackling and off-sides put a lot of pressure on our referees, who have a **difficult enough** job as it is.

Pattern 13: ADJ *enough* n to-inf

The adjective is followed by *enough*, a noun, and a to-infinitive clause. The to-infinitive clause indicates an action that is possible.

Few of them speak **good enough** English to take part in the workshops.

They had a **healthy enough** budget to make it through the year.

There are other substances that we can make but not in **large enough** amounts to ensure optimum health.

Pattern 14: ADJ *enough* n for n

The adjective is followed by *enough*, a noun, and a prepositional phrase which consists of *for* and a noun group.

Sometimes the noun group following *for* indicates a person or thing for whom something is acceptable or suitable.

Will they be **good enough** parents for my baby?

Sometimes the noun group indicates something that can happen or that someone can take part in.

They just did not have **large enough** forces for a guaranteed victory over the well-equipped Australian army.

Pattern 15: ADJ *enough* n for n to-inf

The adjective is followed by *enough*, a noun, a prepositional phrase which consists of *for* and a noun group, and a to-infinitive clause.

Sometimes the to-infinitive clause indicates an event that is possible.

Is it a **big enough** issue for you to vote on it?

I can see that it's a **good enough** book for you to have to publish it.

Sometimes it indicates what can be done by someone with the person or thing already referred to.

It's an **easy enough** question for a chap to answer.

Pattern 16: ADJ *enough* n that

The adjective is followed by *enough*, a noun, and a that-clause. This pattern is less frequent than ADJ *enough* n to-inf (see Pattern 13 above). The that-clause indicates a consequence.

More than 100,000 children annually experience **severe enough** problems that they, or their parents, seek help.

Over just the past few weeks the peace-keeping force has been doing a **good enough** job that people feel safe to go back out on the streets.

Pattern 17: how ADJ

The adjective follows the adverb *how*. This pattern is used in exclamations.

'I've been invited to Estonia.' 'How **marvellous!**' I said. 'You couldn't say no to that.'

Pattern 18: how ADJ v-link n

The adjective follows *how* and is followed by a link verb and a noun group. This pattern is used to ask questions about the extent of a quality.

How **popular** is poetry as a form of entertainment in Britain today?

'How **tall** are you?' 'Five foot.'

The following adjectives are used in questions in this pattern instead of their opposites, even when the question concerns something that is not big, deep, heavy, old, and so on. For example, *how big* is more frequent than *how small* in questions.

big	high	old	wide
deep	hot	tall	
heavy	long	thick	

Pattern 19: how ADJ n v-link

The adjective follows *how* and is followed by a noun and a link verb.

Sometimes this pattern is used in exclamations.

*How **complicated** it was!*

*How **glad** I am that you have Tom Pullings with you.*

*How **lucky** I was to have found someone who loved me this way.*

*How **tough** and **wiry** she looked.*

*How **wise** you are, my darling.*

Sometimes it is used when to emphasize the fact that someone or something has a quality to a great degree.

*It frightened me to see just how **addicted** our youngsters have become to computer games.*

*I mean, nobody could possibly realize how **awestruck** we were.*

*Other chapels to either side of the altar contain substantial early frescoes, hints as to how **beautiful** the church must once have been.*

*It is also easy to forget just how **busy** things were hardly more than a year ago.*

*They don't know how **dangerous** this stuff is.*

*I've told you how **fond** I am of Lena.*

*Everyone talks about how **good** Italian football is.*

Sometimes it is used when reporting questions or referring to something uncertain.

*She's worried about how **clean** the building will be.*

*The question of how **friendly** a teacher can be with her class pupils has long been a matter of concern for educators.*

*We've no idea how **old** the skull is.*

Sometimes it is used after a phrase such as *no matter* to indicate that the fact that someone or something may have a quality to a great degree does not matter.

*No matter how **boring** filing paperwork is, being organised will give you more free time.*

When the adjective with *how* follows a phrase such as *no matter*, the link verb is sometimes not found. This pattern is *how ADJ n*.

*Finally, no matter how **abusive** the memo, never chuck it at your boss's head.*

*Everyone, no matter how **bad** their anxiety, no matter how long they have been anxious, can banish their anxiety.*

Pattern 20: how ADJ it v-link that

The adjective follows *how* and is followed by introductory *it*, a link verb, and a *that*-clause. The *that*-clause refers to the fact or event that is being commented on.

*Over the past year, I have discovered how **important** it is that we as parents choose our child's school very carefully.*

*How **splendid** it is that you are here.*

Sometimes the *that*-clause comes directly after the adjective. This pattern is *how ADJ that*.

*How **wonderful** that foreigners are so drawn to the great heritage of France.*

Pattern 21: how ADJ it v-link to-inf

The adjective follows *how* and is followed by introductory *it*, a link verb, and a to-infinitive clause. The to-infinitive clause refers to the action that is being commented on.

*I can't emphasize how **difficult** it is to get supplies there.*

*I'm a careful driver, but we all know how **easy** it is to creep a few kilometres over the speed limit.*

*How **hard** it is to be patient.*

*Mum was very pleased by the flowers. She made many comments about how **lovely** it was to have them.*

Sometimes the to-infinitive clause comes directly after the adjective. This pattern is *how ADJ to-inf*.

*How **comforting** to be hidden from danger.*

*'How **nice** to see you'.*

Pattern 22: how ADJ cl

The adjective follows *how* and is followed by a finite clause. This pattern is used when talking about someone else's view of something.

*I was so pleased to hear how **delicious** you found our Italian dinner party and hope you continue to enjoy our recipes.*

*Yesterday's stories about the latest sad chapter in Jamie's life illustrate just how **difficult** his father found it to protect his eldest son from the pressures of life.*

Pattern 23: how ADJ a n cl

The adjective follows *how* and is followed by a noun group beginning with *a*, and a finite clause. This pattern is used when asking or reporting questions about the extent of a quality, or when talking about the fact that someone or something has a quality to a great degree.

*There's no better spot from which to see how **beautiful** a city Brisbane is.*

*The leaders still have to work out how **big** a role the army will play in the process.*

*I mean, how **good** a career move can it be?*

*I know how **great** a debt we owe to those who went before us.*

*The sad thing is that people forget how **sick** a woman she has been.*

Pattern 24: however ADJ

The adjective follows the adverb *however*. This pattern, together with the next two patterns, is used to imply that the fact that someone or something may have a quality to a great degree does not matter.

*They should be allowed to establish some sort of state of their own, **however imperfect**.*

*The fact, **however uncomfortable**, is that our cars are choking our country, choking our children.*

*The market in Tokyo is now so jittery it reacts to the slightest rumour, **however wild**.*

Pattern 25: however ADJ n

The adjective follows *however* and is followed by a noun group.

*She alone was on my side, however **erratic** her personality.*

*However **independent** the investigative team, however **objective** its findings, it will be hard for the government to be completely impartial about this business.*

Pattern 26: however ADJ n v-link

The adjective follows *however* and is followed by a noun group and a link verb. This pattern forms a subordinate clause.

*The company has to preserve its small-company flair, however **big** it gets.*

*However **free** opinion is, facts are still sacred, and somebody should be checking them.*

*However **happy** I am, there is a constant calculation of calories in my brain.*

Pattern 27: so ADJ that

The adjective follows *so* and is followed by a *that*-clause. The *that*-clause indicates a consequence of the degree of a quality that someone or something has.

*Alec is the sort of actor whose identification with a role is so **complete** that the man vanishes without trace into the characterization.*

*Hospitals are also finding it so **hard** to recruit nurses that they're raising nurses' salaries.*

*The afternoon slump is so **important** that one scientist claims it causes many road deaths when drivers nod off at the wheel.*

*They are so **keen** to have the plane that they are hiring for next year till they can have their own.*

*There is no job so **simple** that it cannot be done wrong.*

Sometimes *so* and the adjective are put first for emphasis. The Subject then comes after the verb.

*So **risky** was the venture that Mrs. Johnson prayed and cried for days before she felt she could take the chance on losing every piece of furniture she had.*

Pattern 28: so ADJ as to inf

The adjective follows *so* and is followed by a *as to* and an infinitive clause. The infinitive clause indicates a consequence.

*From cheating on taxes to breaking international agreements, dishonesty has become so **common** as to be seen as normal.*

*Their response was so **discreet** as to be practically non-existent.*

Pattern 29: such a ADJ n that, such ADJ n that

The adjective is followed by a noun. The noun is followed by a *that*-clause. If the noun is a singular count noun, the adjective follows *a*. The noun group begins with *such*. The *that*-clause indicates a consequence.

*She ran her business like an expert, but she had such a **good** time doing it that she never considered it work.*

*They are known as the forgotten whales; 65 species of small whales, dolphins and porpoises that have been hunted in such **large** numbers over the last decade that many now face extinction.*

Pattern 30: too ADJ to-inf

The adjective follows *too* and is followed by a to-infinitive clause. The to-infinitive clause refers to an action that is not possible.

In some cases, the action cannot be performed by the person or thing that is the Subject of the link verb.

*A lot of gallery directors are too **busy** to give you their time.*

*Emily was too **sensitive** not to be terribly hurt.*

In other cases, the action cannot be performed by anyone.

*He got out of bed, splashed his face with water, brushed his teeth and tried to find some clothes that were not too **filthy** to wear.*

*The factory ships catch everything, including fish that are too **small** to sell for food.*

Pattern 31: too ADJ for n

The adjective follows *too* and is followed by a prepositional clause which consists of *for* and a noun group.

Sometimes the noun group following *for* indicates a person or thing for whom something is not acceptable, suitable, or easy.

*Those trousers are miles too **big** for her.*

*The hill was just a little bit too **long** and too **steep** for me.*

Sometimes the noun group indicates something that cannot happen or that someone cannot take part in.

*I'm too **old** for that sort of thing.*

*My brother was too **young** for Saturday morning school.*

Pattern 32: too ADJ for n to-inf

The adjective follows *too* and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *for* and a noun group, and a to-infinitive clause.

Sometimes the words after the adjective indicate an event that is not possible.

*At the moment her distress was too **great** for her to wonder how he had managed to get the key.*

*It is not too **late** for parents to book their children into activity holidays this summer.*

Sometimes they indicate what cannot be done by someone with the person or thing already referred to.

*Mobs stormed a city centre and smashed the windows of shops displaying food too **expensive** for them to buy.*

*It was closed by a bolt too **high** for the boys to reach.*

If the clause begins with *introductory it*, the prepositional phrase and the to-infinitive clause together indicate something that should not happen.

*I think it's too **easy** for bands to be written off as sounding like other people.*

4 Ungraded adjectives

An ungraded adjective is one that never or rarely follows a **grading adverb** and which does not have a comparative or superlative form.

Ungraded adjectives have many meanings, but some of the most frequent ungraded adjectives belong to the following meaning groups:

- 4.1 THE 'WESTERN' GROUP
- 4.2 THE 'FORMER' GROUP
- 4.3 THE 'ADULT' AND 'FEMALE' GROUP
- 4.4 THE 'POLITICAL' GROUP
- 4.5 THE 'INDUSTRIAL' GROUP
- 4.6 THE 'NUCLEAR' GROUP
- 4.7 THE 'PLASTIC' GROUP
- 4.8 THE 'ACTUAL' GROUP
- 4.9 THE 'PRIMARY' GROUP
- 4.10 THE 'IDEAL' GROUP
- 4.11 THE 'ABSOLUTE' AND 'MERE' GROUP
- 4.12 THE 'JOINT' AND 'SEPARATE' GROUP
- 4.13 THE 'ADDITIONAL' AND 'OTHER' GROUP
- 4.14 THE 'IMPOSSIBLE' GROUP

In the lists below we show only some of the most frequent adjectives which have at least one ungraded sense. Many have other senses than the ones indicated here. Many of them also have graded senses (see Part 5 below).

4.1 THE 'WESTERN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has a particular physical position or location. Some of these adjectives also have a metaphorical meaning.

Perhaps it is this faith which gives her an inner strength which one can sense as she talks.
Most residents scrape a living by farming or digging out sand and gravel and delivering it to the nearby city of Cotabato.
Crete was barely known 20 years ago, and the western part of the island is still untouched by tourism inland.

eastern	middle	outside	underground
external	national	regional	universal
front	nearby	right	urban
inner	next	rural	western
internal	northern	southern	worldwide
left	opposite	top	

4.2 THE 'FORMER' GROUP

These adjectives indicate the time, duration, or frequency of something.

His daily fitness regime of running 4km, swimming 1km, and doing 30 push-ups would put many people half his age in the back of an ambulance.
The President has made the surprise appointment of a former political rival as his Prime Minister.
I have a lot more friends here than when I was at my old school.
After four years of working on and off doing temporary jobs, she wanted to study for a business degree.

annual	final	interim	past
constant	former	last	permanent
contemporary	future	monthly	potential
current	immediate	old	present
daily	initial	original	previous

regular	temporary	weekly
subsequent	traditional	

4.3 THE 'ADULT' AND 'FEMALE' GROUP

These adjectives classify people and animals in terms of basic things such as age, sex, and whether they are alive or not.

Brian Easton was more than 20 years older than Penny and had five adult children.
Her husband appeared, bleeding but alive, and together they picked their way through the broken timbers of the house.
He walked away from the scene of the accident, urged on by his female companion, later identified as his secretary.

adult	female	lesbian	pregnant
alive	gay	live	
dead	human	male	

4.4 THE 'POLITICAL' GROUP

These adjectives classify people and things related to politics.

While the Ivory Coast does not have diplomatic links with Pretoria, it has maintained closer ties with South Africa than other Francophone states.
The greater use of one-member-one-vote democracy involves more members than ever before in choosing parliamentary candidates and the national leadership.
In principle, we favour referenda, because they disperse political power.
Of course, not everything in our socialist country is wonderful. We still have a long way to develop.

civil	democratic	liberal	radical
communist	diplomatic	parliamentary	republican
conservative	electoral	political	royal
constitutional	federal	presidential	socialist

4.5 THE 'INDUSTRIAL' GROUP

These adjectives classify people and things connected with other human institutions or with human activity, experience, and learning in general.

Large areas of agricultural land remain barren because the farming families who lived there have fled.
The nurses decided to give the patients their emotional support to help them heal.
Industrial production also rose for the first time since January.
Adoption is a legal process where the welfare and interests of the child are served.
Her only other contact was a military officer who would appear every six months with the grim news that her detention was being extended.
We need to foster a greater confidence about our own value and worth, not only among professional women but those who choose to stay home to raise a family.
The reaction of these chemicals with oxygen results in the release of heat. The scientific term for this process is 'combustion'.

academic	commercial	cultural	economic
agricultural	corporate	domestic	educational
civilian	criminal	dramatic	emotional

environmental	intellectual	moral	racial
ethnic	legal	musical	scientific
financial	literary	official	sexual
foreign	medical	private	social
historical	mental	professional	spiritual
illegal	military	psychological	technical
industrial	monetary	public	

4.6 THE 'NUCLEAR' GROUP

These adjectives classify things in the field of science.

Hazards associated with the use of radioactive materials were well understood before **nuclear** power existed.

chemical	negative	positive
electric	nuclear	

4.7 THE 'PLASTIC' GROUP

These adjectives indicate what material something is made of.

There are six of them living in a tiny shelter made from branches and grass, with a **plastic** sheet over it to keep out the rain.

cotton	plastic	woollen
glass	silk	
metal	wooden	

4.8 THE 'ACTUAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is, or is said to be, real, true, or false.

The law does not require a person to be seriously hurt before they can respond to an **actual** or threatened attack.

My family tell me that I should stop dreaming and get myself a **proper** job.

The adjectives *real* and *true* are sometimes used to emphasize the quality of something.

In truth it is a wonderful little car, a joy to drive, a **real** pleasure to look at.

actual	false	true
alleged	proper	
apparent	real	

4.9 THE 'PRIMARY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is the most important part of something. We include here *secondary*, which indicates that something is the second most important part of something.

Jeffrey Cooper describes himself as a **key** figure in the protest movement.

Most of the checkpoints are on border roads, with the **primary** purpose of screening the large volume of traffic passing between north and south.

chief	major	principal
key	primary	secondary
main	prime	ultimate

4.10 THE 'IDEAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is the best, highest, lowest, or only member of a particular class or group. We include here *sufficient*.

The garage may be an **ideal** place to store a car but it is certainly not an **ideal** place to store seedlings.

We made it compact to give **maximum** power in the smallest format.

Tony's **unique** – not just different from other players, but better.

excellent	ideal	only	unique
extreme	maximum	prime	whole
giant	minimum	sufficient	

4.11 THE 'ABSOLUTE' AND 'MERE' GROUP

These adjectives are used before nouns to emphasize the quality of something. We include here *own*, which is used to emphasize ownership. (See also meaning group 4.8 above.)

It's **absolute** nonsense to say we aren't happy with the deal.

The **mere** thought of Laura cast shadows over the otherwise brilliantly sunny day.

The **sheer** volume of stuff they have to read, let alone take in and understand, is amazing.

The redundancy of skilled and experienced workers is a **terrible** waste and a clear sign of an unhealthy economy.

absolute	own	sheer	total
awful	perfect	simple	utter
complete	positive	single	very
dead	pure	strict	
mere	rare	supreme	
outright	raw	terrible	

4.12 THE 'JOINT' AND 'SEPARATE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something relates to a group of people or things together or to each individual person or thing separately.

From the outset Ann and Gail worked well together, making **joint** decisions.

You may have to apply separately and pay a **separate** fee to see each set of information.

collective	joint	relative
exclusive	mutual	separate
individual	particular	various

4.13 THE 'ADDITIONAL' AND 'OTHER' GROUP

These adjectives identify someone or something in relation to someone or something else.

We are looking at catering for the needs of an **additional** 250,000 people over a five-year period.

So what if my memory isn't what it used to be? My **other** mental skills are as sharp as ever.

additional	extra
alternative	other

4.14 THE 'IMPOSSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives have a negative meaning.

It is well **high impossible** without assistance to prepare a complex meal for so many people at the last minute.

impossible	unemployed	unknown
unable	unidentified	

5 Adjectives with both graded and ungraded senses

Many adjectives which have more than one sense are either graded or ungraded depending on which sense is chosen. In the following sets of examples, the ungraded sense is shown first, the graded sense second.

With some adjectives, the graded and ungraded senses have very different meanings.

In the nineteenth century, the **civil** authorities often worked hand in glove with criminals. Some of them are **quite civil** and talk to you. Others shout abuse.

Every building has ramps and special equipment for children who ride in wheelchairs or **electric** carts.

The horse tends to get tense if the atmosphere is **too electric**.

Unlike most pop music, folk music and song came from the **sheer** pleasure of music-making instead of money-making.

There are many walks, short and long, to be taken, some through forest, others along the **sheerest** of cliffs.

With most adjectives, however, the graded and the ungraded senses are similar. The graded sense of the adjective indicates a quality that someone or something has, while the ungraded sense indicates their type or the category that they belong to.

His argument rests on the view that existing **democratic** capitalism is good and must be preserved.

It's part of the President's plan which he says will make the country **more democratic**.

She got a job in a record shop and underwent a rigorous **musical** education.

He was **very musical**; he played the violin and the guitar, and sometimes the trumpet too.

I've regained my confidence now that my **private** life is more settled following my divorce.

Paul is the **most private** person I know and the most complicated.

All adjectives of nationality, such as **American**, **Italian**, and **Japanese**, are sometimes graded, although they are usually ungraded. When the adjective is ungraded, it means simply 'belonging to that nation'. When it is graded, it means 'having the characteristics commonly associated with that nation or with people of that nationality'.

The Swedish academicians who award the annual Nobel Prize for Literature have chosen the **Mexican** poet Octavio Paz.

The Carrera Panamericana, part carnival, part serious racing and **very, very Mexican**, is like no other motorsport event in the world.

Traditionally **Japanese** car manufacturers have looked to **Japanese** companies to supply the hundreds of parts that go into a finished car.

Yakitori at its simplest is a chicken shish kebab with a **very Japanese** flavor.

Here is a list of the most frequent adjectives which have both graded and ungraded senses.

academic	acute	alive	average
active	adult	apparent	awful

bad	ethnic	long	ready
big	exclusive	loose	real
blind	extraordinary	lucky	regular
busy	fair	mad	relative
certain	false	major	relevant
cheap	fast	massive	responsible
civil	federal	mental	revolutionary
classic	flat	military	romantic
clean	foreign	minor	safe
clear	formal	mobile	scientific
cold	free	moral	senior
comfortable	fresh	musical	serious
commercial	full	near	sharp
common	fundamental	necessary	sheer
complex	gay	negative	short
concrete	general	nervous	silent
conscious	genuine	new	silly
conservative	global	nice	simple
constant	good	odd	smart
contemporary	grand	old	social
correct	great	open	soft
creative	guilty	original	solid
critical	hard	outstanding	sound
dead	heavy	particular	special
decent	high	perfect	specific
deep	holy	plain	standard
democratic	hostile	plastic	straight
dependent	hot	political	strange
different	human	poor	strict
diplomatic	ideal	popular	strong
direct	ill	positive	sure
dirty	immediate	possible	technical
domestic	impossible	practical	terrible
dramatic	independent	pregnant	thick
dry	individual	private	true
economic	innocent	professional	unhappy
educational	intellectual	proper	unique
effective	intelligent	proud	unknown
electric	late	public	Victorian
emotional	liberal	pure	wet
empty	light	quiet	wide
enormous	literary	rare	wild
equal	little	raw	wrong

77 Comparative adjectives

This section contains the following:

- 1 The forms of comparative adjectives
- 2 The patterns of comparative adjectives
- 3 The functions of comparative adjectives

1 The forms of comparative adjectives

Most graded adjectives have a **comparative** form. It is used to indicate that someone or something has more of a quality.

The comparative is formed either by adding -er to the end of the adjective, or by using

more before the adjective. Usually, when the adjective has one syllable, the comparative is formed using *-er*, as in *bigger*. When the adjective has two syllables but ends in *-y*, the comparative is also formed using *-er*, as in *happier*. With most other adjectives of two syllables, the comparative is formed using *more*. With adjectives of three syllables or more, the comparative is formed using *more*, as in *more important*.

The adjectives *good* and *bad* have irregular comparative forms: *better* and *worse*. *Old* has an irregular comparative form, *elder*, as well as a regular one. A few adjectives have only a comparative form in one or more senses: *earlier*, *later*, *lesser*, *lower*, *nearer*, and *upper*. Some of these forms are not used in all comparative patterns.

Many adjectives have two forms of comparative, one using *-er* and one using *more*. The most frequent of these are:

angry	gentle	narrow	remote
busy	handsome	obscure	shallow
clever	hungry	pleasant	simple
common	likely	polite	stupid
cruel	mature	quiet	subtle

All adjectives that have a comparative form, however it is made, have a second comparative form that consists of *less* and the adjective, as in *less grand*, *less important*, and *less simple*. This comparative is used to indicate that someone or something has less of a quality.

2 The patterns of comparative adjectives

Comparative adjectives have the following patterns:

Pattern 1: the ADJ-COMPAR

Pattern 2: the ADJ-COMPAR of pl-n

Pattern 3: ADJ-COMPAR *than* n/-ing

Pattern 4: ADJ-COMPAR *than* cl

Pattern 5: ADJ-COMPAR *than* adv

Pattern 6: ADJ-COMPAR *than* adj/-ed

Pattern 7: ADJ-COMPAR *than* prep

Pattern 8: ADJ-COMPAR *than* adj/-ed n

Pattern 9: ADJ-COMPAR n *than* n

Pattern 10: ADJ-COMPAR n *than* prep

Pattern 11: ADJ-COMPAR n *than* cl

Pattern 12: the ADJ-COMPAR n, the ADJ-COMPAR n

Pattern 13: the ADJ-COMPAR, the ADJ-COMPAR

We include here only those patterns which are dependent on the comparative form of the adjective. Comparative adjectives also have the patterns that other adjective forms have. For example, a comparative adjective may be found in the pattern ADJ n.

*Most fathers' involvement tends to include play, rather than the **more arduous** tasks of washing clothes and feeding.*

*The origins of their disagreement can be traced to their personalities: two **more different** individuals would be difficult to find.*

*The **elder** girl, about 21, was married, but her husband had disappeared.*

It may be found in the pattern v-link ADJ.

*Sea salt is **more acceptable** and should be used in preference to table salt.*

*Using the tip of a knife, or your finger nail, whichever is **easier**, nick the skin open on each almond and squeeze the nut out.*

Many comparative adjectives are followed by prepositional phrases, or a to-infinitive

clause, for example, which are patterns of the adjective itself.

*Graduates have become **more aware** of environmental issues, like the general public.*

*His successor will be much **more difficult** to deal with.*

When the comparative adjective is followed by a noun, the noun may be followed by a prepositional phrase or a clause that is the pattern of the noun.

*I have a collection of relaxation tapes which take you through the various methods of relieving tension. For some people the use of a **more active** form of relaxation is most beneficial.*

*The officials have adopted a **friendlier** attitude toward tourism.*

We do not consider these to be patterns of comparative adjectives.

Except in Patterns 1 and 2, comparative adjectives can be modified by **grading adverbs**. The following grading adverbs are typically used with comparatives. The ones marked with * are not used when the comparative comes before a noun.

a bit*	a lot*	infinitely	very much
a good deal*	considerably	much	
a great deal*	far	slightly	
a little*	heaps*	vastly	

Pattern 1: the ADJ-COMPAR

The comparative adjective follows *the*, with no noun following.

This sometimes indicates that two things are being compared. The group can be used as a Subject or Object, as well as a Complement.

*In talking to the couple, it is clear that Donna is the **more rigid**.*

*There's an old joke which involves two old friends arguing about who is being the **more unfaithful**.*

*She sent her daughters off to boarding school when the **younger** was only four.*

It sometimes indicates that a person or thing is being compared with what is expected. The comparative adjective is found with something that indicates a reason, such as a prepositional phrase beginning with *for*, a clause beginning with *because*, or a prepositional phrase or clause beginning with *given*, or it comes after a verb such as *make* which indicates causation.

*Baron Eberhard von Stohrer was a tall career diplomat whose figure was the **more imposing** because of his tendency to wear a long military cloak.*

*Fanny's production rate is the **more impressive** given that there was hardly a time when she was not nursing a sick family member.*

*Grainger's achievement is the **more remarkable** for having taken place in isolation.*

*This 18th Century mill village is the **more remarkable** for its spectacular setting, deep in the luxuriously wooded Clyde gorge.*

Comparative adjectives used in this way sometimes follow the adverb *all*.

*Envy feeds jealousy and makes it **all the more bitter**.*

*It was an unforgettable tale, **all the more extraordinary** for being true.*

Pattern 2: the ADJ-COMPAR of pl-n

The comparative adjective follows *the* and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *of* and a plural noun group. The group can be used as a Subject or Object, as well

as a Complement.

*The **older** of the two officers looked at her with eyes filled with pity.*

*Hugh put his arm around Matt's shoulders. He had been the **taller** of the two for more than a year.*

Pattern 3: ADJ-COMPAR than n/-ing

The comparative adjective is followed by *than* and a noun group or an '-ing' clause.

*Though chess is infinitely **more civilized** than war, I had no appetite for chess.*

*A woman is far **more complex** than a man.*

*Connecting households to the cable will be no **more difficult** than connecting a telephone line.*

*Her antiquated navy was still much **larger** than that of any possible foe.*

*It'll be **nicer** than being at home, in some ways.*

*What could be **more sensible** than returning used carrier bags?*

*The Agriculture Department said today that this year's corn crop is likely to be at least percent **smaller** than last year's.*

Pattern 4: ADJ-COMPAR than cl

The comparative adjective is followed by *than* and a finite clause.

*The composition of the government is in fact **more balanced** than these figures would suggest.*

*His face seemed slightly **narrower** than she had remembered.*

*He's four years **older** than I am.*

*The ideas of economists are **more powerful** than is commonly understood.*

*You're even **prettier** than you were before.*

*He is mentally **stronger** than he has ever been.*

Pattern 5: ADJ-COMPAR than adv

The comparative adjective is followed by *than* and an adverb such as *before*, *ever*, *then*, *now*.

*It means that they are even **more isolated** than before.*

*Bates must win more matches than he did two years ago and the competition is a lot **stronger** than then.*

*They're increasingly frustrated and **more willing** than ever to take their business elsewhere.*

Pattern 6: ADJ-COMPAR than adj/-ed

The comparative adjective is followed by *than* and an adjective such as *normal* or *usual* or past participle such as *expected*, *anticipated*, or *predicted*.

*The response has been **better** than expected.*

*Though the average temperature was only about one degree **colder** than usual, severe effects followed.*

*The rooms are clean and spacious, baths are **larger** than average and there are six rooms that sleep four at £45 each.*

*In some places it is quite a bit **warmer** than normal and in some places it is quite a bit cooler.*

Pattern 7: ADJ-COMPAR than prep

The comparative adjective is followed by *than* and a prepositional phrase.

*We look after our creatures so well that, arguably, they're **better off** than in the wild.*

*It is known that swimming in open water in the early morning or at night is potentially **more dangerous** than at other times, probably because sharks are more likely to search for food then.*

*I believe that the overall commitment to privatisation will create a situation that is **less safe** than under government ownership.*

Pattern 8: ADJ-COMPAR than adj/-ed n

The comparative adjective is followed by *than* and an adjective or a past participle. This complete phrase acts as a single adjective and is followed by a noun. It is sometimes written with hyphens.

*The chemicals sector had a good day yesterday as two companies reported **better-than-expected** figures.*

*Not surprisingly, his large upper torso has **bigger than average** lungs.*

*The long period of low rainfall in many districts will have resulted in **drier-than-normal** conditions in some gardens.*

*However, this does not mean that you need to wait for that long, especially if you are in an **older-than-average** age group.*

Pattern 9: ADJ-COMPAR n than n

The comparative adjective is followed by a noun, *than*, and a noun group.

*Dietrich belonged to a far different and far **more fascinating** industry than the movie world of 1992.*

*Magnus Perrensen was in sober grey, his coat a slightly **lighter** shade than his knee breeches.*

Pattern 10: ADJ-COMPAR n than prep

The comparative adjective is followed by a noun, *than*, and a prepositional phrase.

*The President has said that if war breaks out they will suffer **bigger losses** than in Vietnam.*

*The local fish soup is usually excellent, thicker and with a **more robust** flavour than on the French mainland.*

Pattern 11: ADJ-COMPAR n than cl

The comparative adjective is followed by a noun, *than*, and a finite clause.

*I'm a much **better** father than I was 25 years ago.*

*He now has a **smarter** haircut than he did when he was an international player.*

Pattern 12: the ADJ-COMPAR n, the ADJ-COMPAR n

There are two comparative adjectives in this pattern. Each of them follows *the* and is followed by a noun group. This pattern indicates that two things change in proportion to each other.

*The **more indebted** a company, the **bigger** the change in its cost of capital.*

*The **more outrageous** the bid, the **more likely** its chances of success.*

*According to the theory of deterrence, the **more severe** the punishment, the **less likely** the crime.*

Either one of the noun groups, or both, is sometimes followed by a link verb.

*As they knew, the **more concrete** the plans become, the **higher** the risk of fear and doubt among ordinary people.*

*The **more intimate** his songs have become, the **less effective** they seem to be.*

*Basically, the **more popular** the course, the **more scarce** the places are going to be.*

*The **more relaxed** a thing is, the **more successful** it is.*

Pattern 13: the ADJ-COMPAR, the ADJ-COMPAR

There are two comparative adjectives in this pattern. Each adjective follows the.

*The criteria for the hotel are: good room service; a good restaurant; and no morning traffic noise. As to the room, the **bigger** the **better**, preferably with a good view and, in summer, a balcony.*

*The press generally is wrong, and the **more wrong** the **more unanimous**.*

3 The functions of comparative adjectives

Comparatives have the following functions:

Function 1: Making explicit comparisons

Function 2: Linking clauses together

Function 3: Describing change

Function 4: Emphasizing

Function 5: Indicating a break

Function 1: Making explicit comparisons

Explicit comparisons compare two people, situations, or things, using a comparative and a clause or group introduced by *than*. They are surprisingly rare, accounting for only about twenty per cent of all uses of comparative adjectives.

Comparatives can be used to compare a person or thing with how they used to be, will be, or might be.

*'She looks **lovelier** than I've ever seen her,' Bethan murmured.*

*The agreement should make world peace **more secure** than it has been in the past.*

They can be used to compare one person or thing with another.

*Cantonese is certainly **more archaic** than Mandarin.*

*And his victories have been **more notable** than his defeats.*

They can be used to compare situations.

*Even today, it is much **easier** for a British person who speaks Russian to get work in Moscow than in London.*

Function 2: Linking clauses together

A comparative links two clauses together when only the comparative appears in one clause, without a group or clause introduced by *than*. The second person or thing in the comparison is mentioned or implied in a previous clause.

*His pointed-toe slip-on boots unfortunately let the image down. Walking boots might have been **more appropriate**.*

*The C strain accounts for about a quarter of meningitis cases in Britain. There is no vaccine available for the **more common**, and **more deadly**, B strain.*

*Why did she choose three-day eventing of all equestrian disciplines? Why not showjumping which was **far more fashionable** and perhaps not quite so **difficult** for the beginner?*

*From studies in the wild, Jenkins found that as many as 76 per cent of the young eagles survive their first year. A **more usual** figure for most wild species would be nearer 50 per cent.*

Function 3: Describing change

Another function of comparatives is to describe change. There is only one person or thing implied in this comparison.

The comparative in this function is sometimes found with verbs such as *find*, *get*, *make* and *render* in the pattern **V n adj**.

*The situation is made even **more complex** by the development of a moral sensibility.*

*But Agee's tough style actually appeared to get Pollard **more nervous** and made him talk more.*

*The result of this much better understanding of economic events is that such work will make economics **softer**, **more empirical**, **more experimental**, and therefore **less theoretical**, **less analytical**.*

*Anything that empowers people, making them **stronger** and **more combative**, has got to be a good thing.*

The comparative is sometimes found with verbs such as *become*, *get*, and *grow*. The adjective may occur with a noun, in the pattern **V n**, or by itself, in the pattern **V adj**.

*Some types of cancer are becoming **more common**.*

*The voice grew **louder**, **more insistent**, calling her name over and over again.*

*The marathon became an altogether **more serious** event.*

The comparative itself is sometimes repeated. If it ends in *-er*, the whole comparative is repeated. If it involves *more*, just the word *more* is repeated. The two words are linked with *and*.

*And does that mean essentially putting in more and more data and using **bigger and bigger** computers?*

*Friendship between men and women is becoming **more and more common**, and is its own special delight.*

*Imagine that you stroll around this garden, feeling more at peace, **more and more tranquil**.*

Alternatively, the adverb *ever* or *increasingly* is used before the comparative adjective.

*Employers and employees alike will find the burden of paying so much of their income to the health industry **ever more intolerable**.*

*He knew that his espionage in Washington was becoming **increasingly more dangerous**.*

Function 4: Emphasizing

A comparative adjective is sometimes used with a negative to emphasize a quality that someone or something has.

*I can't think of anything **more lonely** than living your life without sharing with others.*

*Overlooking the broadest stretch of the River Shannon, Suzanne Ryan could hardly have a **more scenic** location for her 85-acre dairy farm.*

When Jenny's daughter was taken into the local hospital eight days after being born, staff could not have been **more supportive**.

I can't imagine a **tougher** place to make baseball work than Seattle, Washington.

Function 5: Indicating a break

Comparative adjectives are sometimes used to indicate a break between one part of what is being said and the next. The comparative adjective also indicates a link between the two parts.

The comparative adjective may be found with a noun such as *evidence, explanation, possibility, problem, reason or suggestion*, which indicates the function of something that is being said. When a comparative is found with a noun of this kind, it indicates that the noun applies to two parts of what is being said: the part that comes before the comparative, and the part that comes after it.

I spent the night in Dearborn for two reasons. First, it would mean not having to spend the night in Detroit, the city with the highest murder rate in the country. My second and **more compelling** reason for going to Dearborn was to see the Henry Ford Museum, a place my father had taken us when I was small and which I remembered fondly.

The temptation to assume similarities between Mars and the Earth led early astronomers astray. The dark areas, which range in colour from brown to grey-green, were termed seas and lakes in the belief that they really were filled with water. Towards the end of the 19th century astronomers realized that there were no oceans on Mars after all, but this opened the way for a **much more intriguing** explanation for the dark areas: that they were covered with primitive vegetation, such as moss or lichen.

The comparative adjective may be found on its own at the beginning of a clause to indicate the way in which something should be interpreted. The adjective most commonly used in this way is **important**.

The work placement is vital because the candidate develops valuable job-related skills, such as the use of computers. **More important**, they are able to show they can hold their own in a work environment.

Forty-one percent agree that Roderic is 'an embarrassment to the Republican Party.' **More important**, 65 percent believe he would not make a good president.

Relentless technological change is driving down many of the elements in the cost of a telephone call. Already, the cost of carrying an additional call is often so tiny that it might as well be free. **More significant**, carrying a call from London to New York costs virtually the same as carrying it from one house to the next.

The comparative adjective is sometimes part of a prepositional phrase.

Qualifications in science at 'A' level carry no guarantee that their holders have any of the skills and qualities which employers seek, including such mundane and old-fashioned virtues as honesty, reliability, neatness, a good speaking voice, unambiguous handwriting, evidence of manual dexterity and aptitude for practical work. At a **more sophisticated** level, A level provides no evidence of the ability to work in a team, cooperate with others or of a wide range of communications skills.

The comparative adjective is sometimes the Complement of the clause, though appearing at the beginning of the clause.

His brightly coloured cut-velvet dresses looked fresh, but nasty neon lace dresses were less successful. **Better** was a more understated look: a simple sleeveless sheer top, layered over a longer, sparkly version.

'A quick glance at the statistics shows that most accidents happen to people who are hillwalking,' said Mr Payne. 'They just don't believe that they are taking a risk. Having qualifications for mountaineers wouldn't do any good because those people don't consider themselves mountaineers. **More important** is educating people in how dangerous mountains

can be.'

The comparative adjective sometimes follows the adverbs *even* or *still*. This indicates that what has gone before is, for example, interesting or important, as well as what comes after. If these adverbs are not used, what comes before may be interesting or important, or it may not.

In Longford's book, however, we are told that in February 1915 Frances Stevenson had an abortion. **Even more intriguing** is the further reference to the same thing having 'happened twice'.

78 Superlative adjectives

This section contains the following:

- 1 The forms of superlative adjectives
- 2 The patterns of superlative adjectives
- 3 The functions of superlative adjectives

1 The forms of superlative adjectives

Most graded adjectives have a **superlative** form. It is used to indicate that someone or something has more of a quality than anyone or anything else.

In most cases, the superlative is formed either by adding *-est* to the end of the adjective, or by using *most* before the adjective. Usually, when the adjective has one syllable, the superlative is formed using *-est*, as in *smallest*. When the adjective has two syllables but ends in *-y*, the superlative is also formed using *-est*, as in *happiest*. With most other adjectives of two syllables, the superlative is formed using *most*. With adjectives of three syllables or more, the superlative is formed using *most*, as in *most important*.

The adjectives *good* and *bad* have irregular superlative forms: *best* and *worst*. *Old* has an irregular superlative, *eldest*, as well as a regular one. The adjectives *northern*, *southern*, *eastern*, and *western* have superlatives formed with *-most*, as in *northernmost*, *southernmost* and so on. A few adjectives have only a superlative form in one or more senses: *furthest*, *latest*, *least*, and *nearest*.

Some adjectives have two forms of superlative, one using *-est* and one using *most*. The most frequent of these are:

angry	gentle	narrow	shallow
busy	handsome	obscure	simple
clever	hungry	pleasant	stupid
common	likely	polite	subtle
cruel	mature	remote	

All adjectives that have a superlative form, however it is made, have a second superlative form that consists of *least* and the adjective, as in *least grand*, *least important*, and *least simple*. This form is used in comparisons to indicate that someone or something has less of a quality than anyone or anything else.

Note that the combination of *most* and an adjective is sometimes not a superlative. In the examples below, *most* is a **grading adverb** meaning 'extremely'.

I was **most grateful** for your assistance.

My walks are a **most important** part of my life and my walking stick is a necessity.

2 The patterns of superlative adjectives

Superlative adjectives have the following patterns:

- Pattern 1: *one of the/poss* ADJ-SUPERL
- Pattern 2: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *n to-inf*
- Pattern 3: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *n rel-cl*
- Pattern 4: *the/poss* ADJ-SUPERL *n since*
- Pattern 5: *the/poss* ADJ-SUPERL *n prep*
- Pattern 6: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *n adj/adv*
- Pattern 7: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *of/among* pl-n
- Pattern 8: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *adj/adv n*
- Pattern 9: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *to-inf*
- Pattern 10: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *rel-cl*
- Pattern 11: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *since*
- Pattern 12: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *prep*
- Pattern 13: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *adj/adv*
- Pattern 14: *the/poss* ADJ-SUPERL
- Pattern 15: *at* poss ADJ-SUPERL

We include here only those patterns which are dependent on the superlative form of the adjective. Superlative adjectives also have the patterns that other adjective forms have. For example, a superlative adjective may be found in the pattern ADJ *n* or in the pattern v-link ADJ.

*My **biggest** health problem is nothing more serious than backache, especially after a bout of gardening.*

*Two approaches seem **most promising**.*

Many superlative adjectives are followed by prepositional phrases, or a to-infinitive clause, for example, which are patterns of the adjective itself. For example, *acceptable* has the pattern ADJ *to n*, *best* has the pattern ADJ *at -ing* and *difficult* has the pattern ADJ *to-inf*.

*One of the **most acceptable** foods to people is oats and oat products.*

*The three Russian women were by far the **best at handling** weapons.*

*Household waste is the **most difficult** to deal with, because it mixes plastic, paper, metals and glass, all of which are likely to be contaminated with food scraps.*

When a superlative adjective is followed by a noun, the noun is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase which is the pattern of the noun. For example, *function* has the pattern N *of n* and *approach* has the pattern N *to n*.

*The **most important** function of the first aider is to ensure that the casualty's air passages remain open and clear, and that she is breathing adequately.*

*One of the **newest approaches** to the use of antibodies was reported by Dr. Stanley Order of Johns Hopkins University.*

We do not consider these to be patterns of superlative adjectives.

Pattern 1: *one of the/poss* ADJ-SUPERL

The superlative adjective follows the phrase *one of the* or the phrase *one of* and a possessive determiner, as in *one of my*. This pattern is found in conjunction with other patterns, for example, the adjective may or may not be followed by a noun, and there is often a clause, group, or phrase following the adjective or noun.

*The language is **one of the most difficult** in Europe.*

*This month sees the end of a set of events which have made this year **one of the most exhausting** you can remember.*

*Our final days are devoted to St Petersburg, once Russia's capital and now **one of Europe's most magnificent** classical cities.*

*With her warm smile and soft voice, Miss Fairchild was **one of the nicest** people Meg had ever met.*

*Chris de Burgh, **one of my oldest** friends, is married to my wife's sister.*

***One of the most popular** forms of entertainment throughout the Twelve Nights was pantomime.*

*Rochefort-en-Terre must rank as **one of the prettiest** villages in Brittany.*

*Within the village they spoke Kanashi, which must be **one of the smallest** languages in the world.*

***One of her most striking** discoveries was that the women mourned more over their mothers' lives than over their deaths.*

*For centuries, quilting and patchwork have been popular needlecrafts, and the log-cabin design is **one of the most versatile**.*

*It is **one of the worst** private residence fires I have seen.*

Pattern 2: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *n to-inf*

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and before a noun. The noun is followed by a to-infinitive clause. The to-infinitive clause has roughly the same meaning as a relative clause. For example, *the most senior American official to visit China* means roughly the same as 'the most senior American official who has visited China'.

*Wayne McCullough is **the best fighter ever to come out of** Ireland, no doubt about it.*

*He is **the most senior** American official to visit China since relations collapsed in June.*

Pattern 3: *the* ADJ-SUPERL *n rel-cl*

The superlative adjective comes before a noun. The noun is followed by a relative clause, often a reduced relative clause. The noun group begins with *the*.

*I thought it was **the best** blues performance I have seen for a long time.*

*Fever Pitch is not only **the best** football book ever written, it's the funniest book of the year.*

*It was **the most delicious** food Paula had ever tasted.*

Pattern 4: *the/poss* ADJ-SUPERL *n since*

The superlative adjective comes before a noun. The noun is followed by a finite clause beginning with *since*. The noun group begins with *the* or a possessive determiner.

*He had compiled just 2,973 points – **his worst start** to a decathlon since he was a teenager.*

Pattern 5: *the/poss* ADJ-SUPERL *n prep*

The superlative adjective comes before a noun. The noun is followed by a prepositional phrase. The noun group begins with *the* or a possessive determiner.

*That would ruin my **best idea** in the whole piece.*

*The fire was **the biggest** industrial blaze in the city's history and took more than six hours to bring under control.*

*He has the potential to be **the most exciting** player in the world.*

It was claimed by critic David Thompson to be 'the most important film since *Citizen Kane*'.

Pattern 6: the ADJ-SUPERL n adj/adv

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and before a noun. The noun is followed by an adjective, such as *available* or *possible*, or an adverb such as *ever*, *so far*, or *yet*.

May was the busiest month so far this year, with a daily average of 140 million shares.
Next year the National Rivers Authority will complete the most extensive survey yet on the threat to Britain's coastline.
Well, I have to admit that building the smallest robots possible is just such a neat idea that I can't resist the temptation of doing it.

Pattern 7: the ADJ-SUPERL of/among pl-n

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *of* and a plural noun group. The adjective is sometimes followed by *among* instead of *of*.

When the preposition is followed by a noun only, the noun indicates a type of person or thing. A phrase such as *the richest of families* is similar in meaning to *the richest families*.

My school friends were all dressed up and all came from the best and richest of families.
He has never enjoyed a reputation as the most tactful of politicians.

When the preposition *of* is followed by a noun group, the noun group refers to people or things which have been mentioned before or whose identity is clear.

Even the most basic of these settlements – a hillside of one-storey brick or wood huts – has the feel of a settled community.
Even the most casual and scruffy among us takes special care with the choice of clothes for special occasions.
Obedience, which people always assume must be the most difficult of the vows, is simply about asking yourself whether you are prepared to listen to other people.
To me, the most educational of the journeys were my visits to the Dalai Lama of Tibet, the first in 1962 and the most recent in 1984.
Habib was the oldest of her children.

The prepositional phrase sometimes comes first in the clause.

Of all the countries in the region, Indonesia has had a reputation as one of the most flexible and lenient when it comes to taking in boat people.

Pattern 8: the ADJ-SUPERL adj/adv n

The superlative adjective is followed by an adjective such as *available* or *possible* or an adverb such as *ever*. This group is followed by a noun. The noun group begins with *the*.

It produces the largest possible wave that you would expect to encounter on an offshore structure such as an oil rig or a ship at sea.
That compares to the previous worst ever losses of £4 billion reported in 1980.
'This is awful news and comes at the worst possible time,' he said.

Pattern 9: the ADJ-SUPERL to-inf

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and is followed by a to-infinitive clause. The subject of the main clause is the same as the understood Subject of the to-infinitive clause (see Section 86). The to-infinitive clause has roughly the same meaning as a relative clause. This pattern usually follows *one of the*.

If the hurricane becomes any more powerful, it'll be one of the most dangerous to hit the United States in this century.
Her character quickly emerged as one of the most interesting to appear in any version of *Star Trek*.
The crowd was one of the largest to gather outside Parliament.

Pattern 10: the ADJ-SUPERL rel-cl

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and is followed by a relative clause.

The pressure applied was the worst I have seen for 20 years.
This kid is one of the youngest they've ever had at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Pattern 11: the ADJ-SUPERL since

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and is followed by a finite clause beginning with *since*.

The demonstrations were the biggest since President Redmund came to power.
The summer of 1995 looks set to become the driest since records began in 1727.

Pattern 12: the ADJ-SUPERL prep

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and is followed by a prepositional phrase.

The Italians make a woman feel the most beautiful in the world.
Leadbetter's gravy sauce is one of the best on the market.
Her bold presentation, one of the most original at the meeting, sought to show just how the brain processes psychic information.
The prolonged drought confronting southern Africa is the most severe since the turn of the century.

Pattern 13: the ADJ-SUPERL adj/adv

The superlative adjective comes after *the* and is followed by an adjective such as *available* or *possible* or an adverb such as *ever* or *yet*.

The police service always needed to ensure that training methods were the best possible.
My day was probably the most boring ever.
My room in the main part of the house was the most comfortable possible, with a marvellous view of a stream and swans.
Our range of domestic products is the most extensive available.
This year's conference of the Queensland Rural Women's Network is expected to be the most successful yet.

Pattern 14: the/poss ADJ-SUPERL

The superlative adjective comes after *the* or a possessive determiner but has nothing following it. The group can be used as a Subject or Object, as well as a Complement.

Sometimes the adjective indicates one of some people or things that have been mentioned before.

*We need only take my car. It's **the biggest**.*

*There were several versions of the plane, **the most common** being 27 ft 4 in long and having an untapered wing of 17 ft 4 in span.*

*They wanted the most powerful detergent, not **the most concentrated**.*

*My youngest client is 19 and **my oldest** is 75.*

Sometimes the adjective indicates a person or group that has not been mentioned before. For example, *my oldest* means 'my oldest child' and *the poorest* means 'the poorest people'.

*It would be exciting to pitch the two of us against **England's finest**.*

***My oldest** is nearly nine.*

*The lottery takes huge sums of money, much of it from **the poorest**, who can ill afford it.*

Pattern 15: at poss ADJ-SUPERL

The superlative adjective comes after the preposition *at* and a possessive determiner. This pattern is used when talking about an occasion when someone or something has as much of a quality as they ever have at any time.

*If he could stand up to Thompson **at his most frightening**, he could have a fair chance of knocking out Hudson.*

*Kemp was **at his most persuasive**.*

*The late summer garden is **at its richest and fullest** in August.*

*I was now at an age when it was hard enough being in any boy's company, let alone one who had seen me **at my most vulnerable**.*

3 The functions of superlative adjectives

Superlative adjectives have the following functions:

- Function 1: Identifying
- Function 2: Linking clauses together
- Function 3: Indicating a break

Function 1: Identifying

The first function of superlatives is to select and identify one person or thing from among a group of people or things.

Often, the superlative adjective follows *the* and there is a prepositional phrase or clause which indicates the group from which the person or thing is selected. For example, in *the most beautiful child in the world*, the *child* is selected from the group of all children indicated by the world.

*To me he is **the most beautiful** child in the world.*

*We believe we have found **the best** of the progressive winemakers.*

*The **newest** weapon in the fight against drug traffickers is to attack the wealth they gain from their activities.*

*Details of the accident, which is **the worst** in the country's history, are still coming in.*

The superlative adjective sometimes follows a possessive determiner instead of *the*. The possessive determiner indicates the group from which the person or thing is selected. For example, in *my oldest daughter*, the *daughter* is selected from all of my daughters.

***My oldest** daughter left home to work abroad.*

*During her **most recent** appearance the singer promised: 'I'm not going to say any more.'*

The superlative adjective sometimes identifies the situation in which something is true, rather than a person or a thing. In this case, the superlative adjective is found without a determiner. For example, in *hunger is most acute in the capital*, *in the capital* indicates the situation that is selected from all other situations as the one in which *hunger is most acute*.

*The BBC West Africa correspondent says hunger is probably **most acute** in the capital.*

*The arrival of 1990s simplicity is **most apparent** at the top of the market.*

*This arrangement is **most common** late in a movie's run.*

*Intervening in the market is **most effective** when you take everybody by surprise.*

When the group from which the person or thing is selected is mentioned before the superlative adjective, earlier in the clause or in a previous clause, and not in a prepositional phrase or clause following the adjective, the adjective is sometimes found without a determiner.

*The freeze is putting the entire nuclear industry through hard times. BNFL is **most bullish** about staying nuclear.*

*The report proposes three options for a company breakup. The first option would be **most effective** in encouraging greater competition.*

If there is no explicit mention of a group from which a person or thing is selected, the implication is that they are selected from all people or things of that type. For example, in the example below, the event is selected from all events.

*They can make **the most boring** event appear to be one they have always wanted to attend.*

Superlative adjectives with an identifying function are sometimes found in a relative clause.

*Your family and friends will unconsciously encourage you to slip back into your old ways, simply because that's the person they're **most comfortable** around.*

*The governments that have begun to rely on tourism include those which previously were **most dubious** about this as a route to genuine development.*

Function 2: Linking clauses together

Like comparative adjectives, superlative adjectives are sometimes used to link two clauses together. The person or thing being described is not indicated in the same clause as the superlative adjective, but in a previous clause.

*Pregnant smokers are only one of the groups of people to be targeted - but they are **the most crucial**.*

*'Three different types of Irish lace were made in America,' says Judith. 'Traditional Irish lace is **the most difficult**.'*

*Republic Street is where the Maltese like to promenade and where café society thrives. Cordina is **the most famous**, a popular coffee house with addictive patisserie.*

*Not all the competitions mean a lot - those in Paris and Bordeaux are **the most important** ones in France.*

*The first pizzeria opened in the 1830s, and the flavourings were much as they are now. Tomatoes, introduced from the New World a century before, were **the most popular**, along with cheese, basil, oil and anchovies.*

If Western Samoa are the most naturally talented rugby nation on earth, then England could well be the **least talented**.

Function 3: Indicating a break

Like comparative adjectives, superlative adjectives are sometimes used to indicate a break in what is being said and to link parts of it together, although comparative adjectives are more frequently found with this function. Adjectives with meanings such as *important* are most frequently found with this function.

When you return home, compare notes. Was the instruction stimulating or humdrum? Were the students engaged or turned off? **Most important**, how would your child respond in this learning environment?

He was able to show that the pressure shift correlated with anomalies in weather all over the globe; **most important**, he was able to prove that droughts in India were linked to the flip of the seesaw that sent pressures down over the southeast Pacific and up in the west, over Australia and Indonesia.

The superlative adjective is sometimes followed by *of all*.

The region is important for two reasons. **Most central of all**, perhaps, is the fact that it is the most productive oil region in the north.

79 ADJ n

The adjective is followed by a noun. Adjectives in this pattern are sometimes called **attributive adjectives**.

	Adjective	noun
the	alleged	criminals
a very	narrow	escape
	electronic	games
	musical	instruments

Most adjectives are sometimes found in the pattern **ADJ n**. We list below those adjectives among the 500 most frequent adjectives which, in the senses shown, are always or usually found in the pattern **ADJ n** rather than in the pattern **v-link ADJ**. In general, ungraded adjectives, or ungraded senses of adjectives, are more usually found in the pattern **ADJ n** than in the pattern **v-link ADJ**.

We used to grumble that we were wasting time learning a **dead language**.

He was a fair boss, he was a **good** friend and taught me a tremendous amount.

As a child I had a really **hot** temper. But I found that only gave me trouble.

We have a **moral** duty to help others.

Often he would see her smiling at him, as if sharing a **private** joke.

I hope you have a **safe** journey to Richard's and back.

Should the big **urban** areas, such as London, have city-wide councils?

I don't want to make the **wrong** decision and regret it later.

absolute 1,2,3,5,6	active 4,6,7	acute 2,6
academic 1,2	actual 1,2	adult 3

agricultural 1,2
alleged
allied 1,2,3
alternative 2,3
ancient 1
annual 1,2
anxious 3
apparent 1
automatic 5
average 1,3
awful 4
bad 3,4,6,11,13,15
big 5,6,7,8,9
bitter 3
black 4,8,9
blind 6,7,8
blue 6
brief 4
bright 1,4
brilliant 1,3,4
broad 2,3,4,5,6,7
brown 4
busy 2
careful 2
Catholic 1
certain 4,1
cheap 2,3,4
chemical 1
chief 3,4
civil 1,2,3,4
civilian 2
classic 1,2,4
classical 1,2,3,4
clean 8,10,11,13,14
clear 6,7
clever 2
close 2,3,2,5,2,6
cold 5
collective 1,2,3
coloured 3
comfortable 5
commercial 1,3,4,5
common 3,4,5,6
communist 2
complete 1,2,5,11
complex 2
comprehensive 2
concrete 4,5
conscious 3
considerable
constant 1
constitutional
conventional 2,3
cool 4,12
correct 3
creative 1,2,3
criminal 2
critical 5,6
cultural 1,2
current 5
daily 1,2,3
dark 7,8,9,10,11
dead 6,10
decent 1,2,3
deep 7,9,11,12,13
democratic 1,3
different 2
direct 1,2,3,4,13
dirty 3,4,5
distant 1,2,3
domestic 1,2,3,4
double 1,2,5,6,7,8
dramatic 3
dry 12,19
due 4
earlier 2
early 1,2,4,5,6,7
easy 6
educational 1
effective 2
electoral
electric 1,2,3
electronic 1,2
emotional 1
empty 2
enormous 2
environmental 1,2
equal 2
ethnic 1,2
exclusive 3
external 1,2,3,4
extraordinary 3
extreme 5
fair 2,3
false 2
far 3,4,11
fast 2,4,8
fat 6
favourite 1
federal 1,2,3
female 3,5
final 2,3
financial
fine 1,5,6,7,8
firm 6,7,8,9
flat 4,8
foreign 2,3
formal 2,4,6
former 1,2,3,4
free 4,13
fresh 1
front 4,5
full 7,8,9,11,13,14,15,16
fun 3
fundamental 4,5
further 4
future 2,6
gay 1
general 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
genuine 1
giant 1
golden 2
good 4,5,7,8,18,19
grand 6,7
great 1,4
greater 2,3

green 3
guilty 2
happy 5,6
hard 3,5,6,12,13,14,16
healthy 2,3,4,5
heavy 3,5,9,10
high 9,13
higher
historic
historical 1,2,3,4
holy 3
hostile 4
hot 5,7,8,13,14
human 1
ideal 4
ill 5
illegal 2
immediate 2,3,4,5
impossible 2
independent 5
individual 1
initial 1
innocent 3
intellectual 1
interim 1
internal 1,2
international 1
joint 1
junior 1
keen 3,5,6,7,8
key 6
large 4
late 1,4
later 3,4
left 2
legal 1
liberal 3
light 2,3,2,6,2,10,3,2,3,3
likely 3
little 2,1,2,2,2,4,2,5,2,6,2,7
live 2,1
local 1,2
long 1,2,1,4,1,5,1,6,3,5
loose 7,9
low 5,10
lucky 4
major 1,6
male 3,5
massive 2
maximum 1,2
medical 1
mental 1,2,3
mere 1,2
middle 2,4,5,6,7
military 1,2
minimum 1,2
minor 2,3
mobile 1
modest 3
monetary
monthly 1,3
moral 2,3,4,5
more 8

musical 1	pure 1,3,4,5	specific 1
naked 1,3,4,5,6	quick 4,7	standard 5
narrow 6,7	quiet 6,7	straight 5,6,7
national 1,2	racial	strange 2
native 1,2,3,4,5,6	radical 1,2	strict 3,4
near 1,10,11	rapid 1,2	strong 6,7,10,11
nearby	rare 3	subject 11
necessary 2	raw 1,4,5,6,7,9	subsequent 1
nervous 2,3	ready 6,7	sudden 1
net 1,2,3	real 4,5,6,8,9,10	sufficient 2
new 4,5,6,8	recent	super 3
northern	red 4	sure 4
nuclear 1,2	regional	technical 1,2
occasional	regular 1,2,3,7,8,11	teenage 1,2
odd 4	relative 2,3	terrible 4
official 2,3,4	remote 1,2	thick 9
old 5,7,8	responsible 5	thin 6
only 4	rich 5,9	tight 2,6,9
open 6,8,14,15,16,17	right 1,2,1,3,1,12,2,2,5,4	top 1,2,4,6,7,8,11
opposite 2,3	romantic 2,3,6	total 2,6
ordinary 1	rough 4,6	tough 3,4
other 1,2,4,5,6	royal 1,2	traditional 1,2
outside 1,2,4,6,7	rural 2	tremendous 1
outstanding 3	sad 2,4	true 2,3
overall 1	safe 5,6	ultimate 1,2,3,4,5
overseas 1,2	scientific 1,2	underground 1,4
parliamentary	secondary 1,2	unfair 2
particular 1,2,3	secret 1	unhappy 3
past 3,6	senior 1,5	universal 1
peaceful 1	sensible 3	upper 1,2
permanent 3,4	sensitive 4,6	urban
plain 1,6	separate 2	various 1
poor 3	serious 3,4,7	vast
popular 3,4,5	sexual 1,2,3,4	very 5,6,7
positive 3,4,6,8,9	sharp 7	Victorian 1
possible 2,7	sheer 1	violent 2,3,4,7
potential 1	short 2,3	voluntary 4
powerful 3,4	significant 1,2,3	warm 3
practical 1,3	silent 2,5,6	weekly 1,2
pregnant 2	simple 6	western 1,2
present 1,3	single 1,4,5,6	wet 7
previous 1	slight 1	white 6
primary 1,2,3	small 6	whole 1,4
prime 1,2,3	smart 3,4	wide 2,8
principal 1	social 1,2,3,5	wild 1,2,9
private 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11	socialist 1	willing 2
professional 1,2,4	soft 8	wooden 1
proper 1,2	solid 1,4,5,11	worldwide
proud 2	sorry 11	wrong 2,3,12
psychological 2	sound 4	young 2
public 3,4,5,7,8	southern	

80 det ADJ n

The adjective comes before a noun, and the noun group typically begins with a determiner, such as *a*, *any*, *my*, *the*, or *these*. Some adjectives typically occur with *the* only, or with a possessive determiner (*my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *our*, *their*) only. These are indicated

by the word *my* in the lists below. These patterns are *the* ADJ n and *poss* ADJ n.

Some of these adjectives also occur as determiners. For example, *other* is an adjective when it follows a determiner, as in *the other people*, but it is sometimes a determiner itself, as in *other people*.

determiner	Adjective	noun
a	final	letter
her	own	toys
the	same	person

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FOLLOWING' GROUP
- 2 THE 'OTHER' GROUP
- 3 THE 'REQUISITE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ONLY' GROUP
- 5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'FOLLOWING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate where something is, or when it occurs, in relation to something else.

*The Joint Research Centre employs postgraduate researchers in the **forementioned** disciplines to work on joint projects.*

*Returning to her husband in the spring of 1920, she gave birth, over the **ensuing** 12 years, six more times.*

*When I went to interviews and people asked me why I had left my **last** job, I was honest.*

*We went Christmas shopping in London the **other** day. It was a big mistake.*

*Later in the show Ann described the threatening phone message Derek had left the **previous** week.*

forementioned	following 2,3 (the)	next 3 (the)	previous 2 (the)
aforesaid	last 2	other 7 (the)	
ensuing 2 (the)	later 3	past 4 (the)	
final 1	near 9 (the)	penultimate	

2 THE 'OTHER' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is identified in relation to someone or something else that has been talked about.

*We were going to walk down the river the **one** side then back up the **other** side.*

*This morning my local supermarket is charging £3.90 a pound for steak. In America the price for the **same** product is only £1.60 (£2.40).*

corresponding 1	opposite 2	same 1,3,4,5
one 6 (the)	other 3	

3 THE 'REQUISITE' GROUP

These adjectives identify something in some other way. *Late* identifies a person who has died.

These photographs are from the collection of the **late** Michael Daunt OBE, one-time chief test pilot of Gloster Aircraft Ltd.

Since all constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority, the **magic** number in the 100-member senate is 67.

If a sweet paper or a discarded sandal is dropped I can harpoon the **offending** object or deftly sweep it aside.

Last year alone, she paid for an indoor swimming pool, an elaborate sports complex for her **old** school and a costly refurbishment of the town's biggest kindergarten.

Once on the bus, my neighbor and the driver thought of two other routes for me to try, but I stuck to my **original** plan.

He'd met with his adviser, he'd registered, signed up for the **requisite** courses. He'd even gone to the first few weeks of classes.

Simply wash your car in the **usual** way and Wash-n-wax will leave a lasting protective shine.

In the case of **respective**, the noun following the adjective is plural. This pattern is **poss ADJ pl-n**.

Both Dagnew and Ying Xue have fathers who are farmers back in **their respective** countries.

accustomed 3 (my)	offending 1 (the)	regular 5	respective (my)
late 5 (the)	old 6 (my)	relevant 2 (the)	usual 1
magic 7 (the)	original 1	requisite 1	

4 THE 'ONLY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate how many of something are involved.

My dog lies with his chin on his paws, his eyes following my **every** move.

He keeps his **few** belongings in a shopping bag in a locker at Union Station.

I never eat any sugar or sweeteners now, though in the past I had the **odd** chocolate bar, usually with nuts.

Mr Kinnock's image may not have been the **only** reason for his failure.

Elizabeth limits herself to a **single** cup of tea and one sandwich.

every 1,5 (my)	odd 2	single 2
few 2	one 2	
many 1	only 3	

5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other adjectives which have this pattern.

The editor refused to allow him to publish anything but the **bare** facts of the arrests.

Do the words that enter a language in a **given** year provide a verbal portrait of the period?

I have to pretend I hate holidays; that the **last** thing I want to do is go on holiday.

It is important to think carefully about your **own** particular needs.

bare 6,7 (the)	last 9 (the)
given 2	own 1,2,3 (my)

Other related pattern

a ADJ amount

The adjective is followed by a noun, or a number and a noun, which indicates an amount. The noun group begins with a.

Most of the adjectives with this pattern indicate that an amount is small or insignificant.

When he came back a **bare** two hours later, his genial expression was no longer there.

The layer of topsoil is thin – a **scant** two inches deep – and the rocks are many.

bare 8	miserable 5	trifling
measly	paltry 1	
mere 3	scant 2	

There are three other adjectives which usually have this pattern.

An **estimated** thirty thousand people gathered in the city centre and disturbances broke out when several thousand then marched towards City Hall.

Not surprisingly, T-shirts continue to represent a **whopping** 80 percent of all merchandise sales.

estimated 1	full	whopping
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81 v-link ADJ

The adjective group follows a link verb. Adjectives in this pattern are sometimes called **predicative adjectives**.

	verb group	Adjective group
I	was	happy.
She	seemed	quite nice.
No one	felt	safe.
He	went	white.

Most adjectives are sometimes found in the pattern **v-link ADJ**. We list below those adjectives among the 500 most frequent adjectives which, in the senses shown, are always or usually found in the pattern **v-link ADJ** rather than in the pattern **ADJ n**. The list includes a few adjectives, such as *awake* and *asleep* which are less frequent but which occur only with the pattern **v-link ADJ**. In general, graded adjectives, or graded senses of adjectives, are more usually found in the **v-link ADJ** pattern than ungraded ones.

This pattern is used to say that someone or something has a particular quality or is in a particular state, or that there is or is not a change of quality or state.

He was so numb with exhaustion that he **could** scarcely **keep** **awake**.

You can go out to a club and **get** **drunk** every night of the week and you won't pay a cent.

Very few of them want to **be** **ill**, let alone visit a doctor.

She was **very** **particular** in all ways. A real lady I should imagine.

No one followed him. He was **safe**.

The adjectives **bad** 12, **empty** 4, **fresh**, **funny** 3, **great** 8, **guilty**, **rough**, and **strange** are found only with the verb **feel**.

When I heard the news I felt **empty**.

These days you are made to feel **guilty** if your child doesn't participate in many different sports.

ablaze 1,2,3	correct 2	hot 3	relative 5
active 5	crazy 5	ill 1	responsible 1,2
adult 4	criminal 3	keen 1	rich 13
afire 1,2	dead 7	lacking	right 6,7,8
afloat 1,2	different 3	late 2	rough 5
afraid 1,2,3	distant 4	left 2	safe 2,3,7,11
aglow 1,2	drunk 3	loose 3	scared 1
alight 1,2	dry 10	low 3,17	secret 1
alike 1	due 5	mad 3	short 6,12
alive 1,2,3,4	easy 4	mobile 2	shut 1,2,3,4
alone 1,2,3,6	effective 3	naked 1,3	sick 2
ashamed 1	empty 3,4	new 7	silent 1
asleep 1	engaged 2,3,4	nice 4	slow 4,8
awake 1	equal 3	okay 1,2	small 7
bad 7,12	extra 2	open 17,19,28	sorry 2
blind 3	fast 3,7	opposite 3	strange 3
brief 3	fine 1,2,1,3,3	overstuffed	sure 1,5
broke 2	flat 3,5	pale 2	underpaid
brown 2	free 4,11	particular 4	understaffed
busy 3,6	fresh 11	past 5	usual 1
certain 1,3	friendly 2	positive 5	visible 1
cheap 1	full 4,5,6	possible 1,3	welcome 6
close 1,9,10	funny 3	practical 2	white 3
cold 4,9	glad 1	present 1,2	whole 3
comfortable 6	good 6	proper 3	wide 3,9
complete 7	great 8	public 9	wild 7
conscious 4	guilty 1	quick 6	wrong 1,5,6,9
cool 10	happy 3,4	quiet 5	
	high 17	ready 1,2	

Other patterns

Most adjectives which are sometimes used after link verbs can also be used in one or more of the patterns below.

- 1 Some adjectives are used after verbs which are used to describe a change of quality or state but are not regarded as true link verbs because they have a complete meaning in themselves.

William was also caught but managed to **struggle free** and run for cover.

Allow the sugar to **set hard**.

The door **slammed shut**.

- 2 Most adjectives which have the pattern **v-link ADJ** can also be used after a verb group and a noun group, as in *It's driving me **crazy***. This pattern is **v n ADJ** (see Section 82, Productive uses).

- 3 Some adjectives are used after a verb, a noun group, and the preposition **as**. This pattern is **v n as ADJ**.

Active voice: v n as ADJ

	verb group	noun group	as	Adjective group
She	perceived	him	as	stupid.

Passive voice: be v-ed as ADJ

	verb group	as	Adjective group
His condition	was described	as	stable.

This pattern is used when saying what someone thinks of a person or thing.

If this tale had been written as a novel it **would have been dismissed as absurd**.

I **regarded them as dangerous**.

- 4 Adjectives which are followed by a prepositional phrase or clause which is part of the adjective group can be used directly after a noun, as in *people **willing to help***. See Section 83.

- 5 Many adjectives are used after an indefinite pronoun, such as *someone*, *anything*, or *nobody*, or an indefinite adverb, such as *anywhere* or *nowhere*. This pattern is **pron-indef/adv-indef ADJ**.

For **someone so clever**, she's amazingly good at getting herself in a pickle.

Finding **somewhere decent** to live and staying solvent are likely to be your biggest non-academic challenges during your time as a student.

I already had a night club so the nights were sorted, but there was **nowhere different and interesting** I could spend my days.

I didn't go **anywhere exciting**.

I have just seen **something very funny**.

I've never seen her do **anything outrageous**.

There was **no one visible** in the room.

The adjective may have its own pattern. For example, a **comparative** adjective may be used with *than* and a noun group.

I can't think of **anything more cynical** than people who would risk a great deal of lives just to see if their weapons work.

Anyone **older than 40** has difficulty dealing with the Internet.

Next week we'll be looking at **nothing smaller** than the structure of the universe.

82 ADJ after v

The adjective group comes after a verb group.

In some cases, the adjective group gives more information about the person or thing indicated by the Subject. The adjective group may come immediately after the verb group, as in *She stood **still***, or it may follow a noun group or a prepositional phrase, as in

Noll had entered the kitchen unnoticed. This is Pattern 1. Pattern 1 has no passive.

In other cases, the adjective group follows a verb group and a noun group and gives more information about the person or thing indicated by the noun group. The pattern is **v n ADJ**. This is Pattern 2. Pattern 2 has a passive in which the adjective group gives more information about the person or thing indicated by the Subject. In both active and passive, there is occasionally an adverb or prepositional phrase before the adjective group.

Pattern 1: ADJ after v

	verb group		Adjective group
Sally	stared	at her	open-mouthed.
She	stood		still.
The cancer	can grow		undetected.
He	barged	into their homes	uninvited.
Noll	had entered	the kitchen	unnoticed.
The robber	escaped		unpunished.

Pattern 2

Active voice: v n ADJ

	verb group	noun group		Adjective group
I	've seen	Ernie Banks		naked.
They	released	him		unharmcd.
He	put	it	down	untouched.

Passive voice: be v-ed ADJ

	verb group		Adjective group
The car	was returned		intact.
The letters	are brought	to her	unopened.
The horse	was bought		unseen.

Adjectives with these patterns belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'UNSEEN' GROUP
- 2 THE 'UNASKED' GROUP
- 3 THE 'UNHARMED' GROUP
- 4 THE 'UNAIDED' GROUP
- 5 THE 'NAKED' GROUP
- 6 THE 'STOCK-STILL' GROUP
- 7 THE 'SENSELESS' GROUP
- 8 THE 'UNUSED' GROUP
- 9 THE 'UNINTERRUPTED' GROUP
- 10 THE 'LEFT-HANDED' GROUP
- 11 THE 'NEAT' GROUP
- 12 THE 'HIGHER' AND 'LOWER' GROUP
- 13 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'UNSEEN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something, or something happens, without being seen, heard, or recognized. We also include here *incognito*, which indicates that someone does something while hiding their identity. All these adjectives except *incommunicado* and *unheard* have only Pattern 1.

Many doctors travel incognito as they feel assisting with inflight emergencies is a thankless and potentially dangerous task.

We will try to slip in unseen so no one will know that reinforcements have arrived.

incognito	unheard	unobserved	unremarked
incommunicado	unheeded	unrecognized	unseen
undetected	unnoticed	unrecorded	

2 THE 'UNASKED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something without having been asked. They have only Pattern 1.

His advice, offered to her unasked, was to stay home and make the best of things.

unasked	unbidden	uninvited
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3 THE 'UNHARMED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is not harmed, opposed, or impeded. *Unchallenged*, *unchecked*, *uncontrolled*, *unfettered*, *unhindered*, *unimpeded*, *unmarked*, and *unmolested* have only Pattern 1. *Whole* has only Pattern 2.

The kidnapped assistant was freed unharmcd 25 minutes later when police caught up with the getaway car.

Birmingham deservedly went ahead a minute before the break when Whyte raced in unmarked to head home Jonathan Hunt's free-kick.

He was elected unopposed.

Mr Baker was the man who emerged unscathed from every disaster.

Usually the piranhas swallow their prey whole.

alive	unchecked	unhurt	unopposed
free 4	uncontrolled	unimpaired	unpunished
intact	unfettered	unimpeded	unscathed
unaltered	unhindered	unmarked	untouched
unchallenged	unharmcd	unmolested	whole 3

4 THE 'UNAIDED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something has no help, resources, or protection. They have only Pattern 1.

She became the first woman to make it to the top of Everest unaided and without oxygen.

The vehicles stood unprotected, inviting attack.

helpless	unaccompanied	unassisted	unguarded
naked 3	unaided	unattended	unprotected
single-handed	unarmed	unescorted	

Adjectives

5 THE 'NAKED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is not wearing clothes, or that part of their body is unclothed. **Barefoot** and **bareheaded** have only Pattern 1.

Visitors are requested to **enter barefoot** into his space-age study, as if it were a temple of science.

The party was at La Mama's, a freaky theater place where the actors and actresses **walked around naked** as a matter of course.

barefoot	nude	unclothed
bareheaded	stark naked	
naked 1	topless	

6 THE 'STOCK-STILL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is in a particular physical position. They have only Pattern 1. They usually occur after the verb *hang, lie, sit, or stand*.

Now that you are **lying flat**, hold this book above and in front of you.

The car door **hung open** behind him.

The lieutenant **stopped and stood stock-still**.

The adjective **knee-deep** is usually followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*. This pattern is v ADJ in n.

He has **waded knee-deep in mud** where roads ought to have been.

flat 3,5	open 3	shut 1	straight
flat-footed	prone	sprawled	upright
knee-deep	prostrate	still 1	wide
motionless	proud 5	stock-still	

7 THE 'SENSELESS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is in a particular emotional or physical state. Most of them only have Pattern 1; *awake, dead, drunk, sober, and unconscious* sometimes have Pattern 2.

His friends **looked at him aghast**.

She gave Booter a venomous look and polished off her drink just as the boy **arrived breathless** on the terrace.

She had never **seen him drunk** before.

He **stared at him transfixed**, her plan of escape forgotten.

He lay **unconscious** on the road with blood pouring from his head wounds.

aghast	dead	poker-faced	straight-faced
amazed	drunk	red-faced	transfixed
appalled	entranced	senseless	unafraid
ashen-faced	expressionless	sober	unconscious
awake	forlorn	speechless	unseeing
breathless	goggle-eyed	spellbound	wide-eyed
comatose	open-mouthed	stony-faced	

8 THE 'UNUSED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is not used or dealt with. They often occur after

the verb *lie, sit, or stand*.

A cup of tea **sits untouched** on the deck beside it.

But it is understood that another £720 million is **lying unused**.

Back in London, MGN's former headquarters in Holborn **stands vacant**, awaiting redevelopment.

deserted	unfinished	untouched
neglected	unopened	unused
undisturbed 1,2	unread	vacant

9 THE 'UNINTERRUPTED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something happens without stopping. They have only Pattern 1.

Founded in 1939, it was one of the comparatively few local shows to **continue uninterrupted** throughout the war years.

unabated	undisturbed 3	uninterrupted
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10 THE 'LEFT-HANDED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate which hand someone uses to do something, or whether they use one hand or both. They have only Pattern 1.

More players are choosing to **bat and bowl left-handed** to gain an advantage.

The manner in which Waugh **pulled the ball down two-handed** was magnificent.

left-handed	right-handed
one-handed	two-handed

11 THE 'NEAT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate what something is or should be like when it is eaten or drunk. They have only Pattern 2.

She was even trying to make him **drink his coffee black**.

'All sherries can be **served chilled** and should be **served chilled**,' Brian says firmly.

Do you always **drink your whisky neat**?

black	hot	warm
chilled	neat 7	
cold	straight	

12 THE 'HIGHER' AND 'LOWER' GROUP

These adjectives indicate the value of something such as a currency or shares in a company when financial markets close or open. They have only Pattern 1. The adjective is often in the comparative form.

In Tokyo, **stocks closed lower** after thin trade.

The adjective is often followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *at* or *against*.

In Frankfurt, the dollar **opened slightly higher against the German mark**.

Brambles shares **ended steady at \$13.86 yesterday**.

cheap	expensive	low	strong
constant	firm	stable	unchanged
dear	flat 17	static	weak
easy	high	steady	

13 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern. *Empty-handed*, *quiet*, *silent*, and *unannounced* have only Pattern 1. *Cheap* has only Pattern 2.

*To the astonishment of all concerned, she was so familiar with the town that she was able to lead the researchers through it **blindfold**.*

*They stole baby milk and then they **sold it cheap**.*

*They walked into his hotel room **unannounced**, and Rizzoli instantly smelled trouble.*

blindfold	half-price	silent
cheap	live	unannounced
empty-handed	quiet	unplugged

Productive uses

1 Pattern 2 (v n ADJ) is often used with verbs such as *drive*, *make*, or *set* to indicate that someone or something is caused to have a particular quality, or to be in a particular state. It is also used with verbs such as *keep* to indicate that someone or something is caused to retain a quality or remain in a state.

*The blast was so intense that several parked cars were set **ablaze**.*

*She's driving me **crazy**.*

*He threw himself **flat** and crawled toward a clump of shrubbery.*

*'Sport is going to keep you **healthy** and take the stress out of your mind,' she said.*

*There can be no other reason for keeping these documents **secret** other than that they cause embarrassment to the British establishment.*

*The van in which they were travelling was turned over, the occupants were dragged out and beaten **senseless**.*

*And I knew what had made me **so unhappy** for so long.*

Though the adjective usually comes after the noun group, it sometimes comes before it, especially when the noun group is a long one.

*She and Mr Sweet are keeping **secret** the location of their wedding, reception and honeymoon.*

2 Pattern 2 (v n ADJ) is often used with verbs such as *find*, *think*, and *consider* to indicate what someone thinks of a person or thing.

*Some adults may find it **amusing**, others may be appalled.*

*I was never considered **particularly clever**.*

Other related patterns

v ADJ at amount

See Section 92, Productive use.

v ADJ in n

See meaning group 6 above.

83 n ADJ

The adjective follows a noun.

	noun	Adjective
the	devil	incarnate
	F	natural
the	Minister	Plenipotentiary

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'MAJOR' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ELECT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PAR EXCELLENCE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'DEEP' GROUP
- 5 THE 'NORTHBOUND' GROUP
- 6 THE 'CELSIUS' GROUP
- 7 THE 'CONCERNED' GROUP
- 8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'MAJOR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a note in music is flat, sharp, or natural, or that a musical scale is in a major or minor key.

*The angel is playing a violin to the Holy Family while Joseph holds a score, which contains a little lullaby in C **major**.*

*The next note to get your attention is F **sharp**, that's in the violins.*

flat 20	minor 3	sharp 12
major 6	natural 8	

2 THE 'ELECT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate something about a role, for example that someone has not yet taken it on (e.g. *designate*, *elect*), or that they no longer have it (e.g. *dowager*, *emeritus*).

*'These young people are our greatest chance and our greatest hope,' said the president **elect**. Although he retired in 1981, he held the titles of Master **Emeritus** and Professor **Emeritus** until his death.*

designate 4	elect	plenipotentiary 2
dowager	emeritus	

3 THE 'PAR EXCELLENCE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something very well or would have liked to do something very well, or is a very good example of something.

While doctors, lawyers and engineers are **professionals par excellence**, teachers, academics and social workers are insecure in their professional status.

That man was a genius, that man was success **incarnate**!

extraordinaire incarnate 2	manqué par excellence
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4 THE 'DEEP' GROUP

These adjectives are used to indicate how big something is. See also **amount ADJ** in 'Other related patterns' below.

The grass was **knee high**.

In the case of **deep**, the adjective is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with **in**. This pattern is **n ADJ in n**.

The track ahead was **ankle deep in mud** but we could wait no longer.

deep 3	high 2	thick 2
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5 THE 'NORTHBOUND' GROUP

These adjectives are used to indicate one side of a road, particularly a motorway.

Southbound travellers may change carriageways by leaving the motorway at Junction 38 and joining the M6 **northbound** on the same interchange.

eastbound	southbound
northbound	westbound

6 THE 'CELSIUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate the scale that a temperature is measured on.

The fuel reaches a maximum of 324 **degrees Celsius**.

The paper has a huge weather page, complete with colour coded maps and temperatures in **degrees Fahrenheit**.

These adjectives sometimes follow a number. This pattern is **num ADJ**.

Temperatures will be warmer than today, up to about **eight celsius, forty-six fahrenheit**.

Celsius	Fahrenheit
Centigrade	Kelvin

7 THE 'CONCERNED' GROUP

These adjectives are used to indicate the people or things involved or relevant in a situation. The noun always comes after **the**.

He plans to use **the time available** in a more varied way.

This is a problem which is rare but nevertheless can be extremely disturbing for **the people concerned**.

The court was told there was no suggestion that this tampering was carried out by Medical X-ray Supplies. **The person responsible** had never been found.

affected available	concerned involved	present required	responsible suggested
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8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

The priest, Pastor Joseph Doucé (**e acute**) was a Protestant clergyman.

A block east along on Broadway and 18th St is Paragon, the sports department store, and ABC, the city's **home furnishing store deluxe**.

The accurate depiction of a criminal trial will usually provide **drama enough**.

His faith was Christocentric, based on a firm belief in Jesus Christ as **God Incarnate**.

If you use that train to get to Norfolk at present, you won't be able to from **Monday next**.

The UN women's conference **proper** will have 40,000 government delegates.

acute 6	incarnate 1	next
deluxe	included	payable
enough	limited	proper 4

Productive use

Adjectives which are followed by a prepositional phrase or a to-infinitive clause which is part of the adjective group can be used directly after a noun.

It was not a **suggestion calculated to please the magistrate**.

In Roy Aitken they have a **manager capable of getting the best out of the players**.

The answer could be that the universe was created by beings with minds **similar to our own**.

But there is hope, forgiveness, and people **willing to help**.

Other related patterns

amount ADJ

The adjective follows a noun group which indicates an amount.

A number of adjectives with this pattern indicate how much something measures. The measurement may be of size, duration, age, or, in the case of **proof**, alcoholic content.

There was water everywhere – **several feet deep**.

Each semester is **15 weeks long** and ends with a three-week assessment period.

At only **17 per cent proof**, the Irish whiskey-based drink is sufficiently gentle to appeal to a wide audience.

Colin Gibson shares a corrugated-iron hut about **three metres square** with four other adults.

deep	old	tall
high	proof 3	thick
long	square	wide

ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

The cultures of Britain and the US are **miles apart**.

The maximum time allowed for both songs is **8 minutes inclusive**.

According to the latest calculation of climate change, the winter snowlines will move north **5 to 10 degrees latitude** by 2050.

Do you know that when the two ends of the tunnel met in the middle they were only a few inches **out**?

Over 1,500 skilled and experienced people aged **twenty-plus** are currently working overseas in two-year posts.

For two days **running**, thousands of commuters had to leave trains to walk along the tracks.

apart	latitude	maximum	plus
inclusive	longitude	minimum	running
late 3	max 1	out 2.8	tax-free

n ord ADJ

The adjective follows a noun and an ordinal. There is one adjective, *removed 2*, which has this pattern.

He was Deirdre's cousin **once removed**, two years older than she.

num ADJ

See meaning group 6 above. There is one other adjective, *strong 15*, which has this pattern.

They arrived with 15,000 men, armed **junks** and a caravan of camels and horses **several thousand strong**.

84 ADJ that

The adjective is followed by a **that-clause**. The word *that* is sometimes omitted.

	Adjective	that-clause
He was	annoyed	that no meal was available.
I felt	sure	that Mike and Tina could find another job.
He became	terrified	that a snake was going to bite him.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'SURPRISED' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'HORRIFIED' GROUP
- 4 THE 'GLAD' GROUP
- 5 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP
- 6 THE 'AWARE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'ANXIOUS' GROUP
- 8 THE 'AGREED' GROUP
- 9 THE 'INSISTENT' GROUP
- 10 THE 'CAREFUL' GROUP
- 11 THE 'LUCKY' GROUP
- 12 THE 'CORRECT' GROUP

1 THE 'SURPRISED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is surprised or puzzled about something.

I'm just **puzzled** that you always appear in the strangest places.

I'm not **surprised** the staff support you.

amazed	astounded	incredulous	shocked
astonished	bemused	puzzled	surprised

2 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is angry about something.

He was very **angry** that she had spoken to people about their private affairs.

I'm **indignant** that this money was used for purposes other than those intended.

angry	furious	irritated	resentful
annoyed	incensed	livid	
bitter 2	indignant	mad	
cross	irate	outraged	

3 THE 'HORRIFIED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a range of other negative reactions to something.

'Has it ever occurred to you,' I said, 'that you are **envious** that my books are more successful than yours?'

I am absolutely **horrified** that this has happened.

We were **worried** that the children were failing to reach developmental milestones.

The adjective *bad* occurs with the verb *feel*.

He said he was pretty hard on you. He felt **bad** that you had to leave that way.

aghast	disgusted	heartbroken	sad
ashamed	dismayed	horrified	sorry
bad 12	distraught	impatient	unhappy
concerned 2	disturbed 2	jealous	worried
critical 4	envious	perturbed	
disappointed	frustrated	regretful	

4 THE 'GLAD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a range of positive reactions to something.

'Worst Journeys' is the kind of book that makes you **glad** you're safe at home.

Most of the time I'm just **thankful** that I've got a job - my younger brothers can't get permanent employment.

The adjective *good* occurs with the verb *feel*.

You should feel **good** that you saved a life and found a new family for this pet.

awestruck	flattered	happy	thankful
chuffed	glad	heartened	thrilled
content 2.1	good 6	jubilant	
ecstatic	grateful	pleased	
encouraged	gratified	proud	

5 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is certain or uncertain of something.

*I'm fairly **certain** he is an American.*

*When we both feel **comfortable** that Ian is established and that he doesn't need me any more I will step down.*

*I am absolutely **positive** that this is what should be done.*

*Many academics remain **unconvinced** that higher education has a problem with rising dropouts.*

certain 1.1	doubtful	satisfied 2	unconvinced
comfortable	dubious	sceptical	
confident	persuaded	sure	
convinced	positive	uncertain	

6 THE 'AWARE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone knows or does not know something.

*Much later he became **aware** that Susanne had again fired the pistol.*

*He was completely **ignorant** that the real business of the people he represented was cocaine.*

aware	conscious	mindful
cognizant	ignorant	unaware

7 THE 'ANXIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate how someone feels about something that may happen or may be the case. The that-clause often contains a modal verb.

*The government is **anxious** that the hostages should be released.*

*He is also **keen** that people of all ages have a chance to educate themselves.*

*Doctors were **optimistic** that he would make a full recovery.*

*He said the people are **terrified** that at any moment they may be killed.*

*I am five foot four inches tall and my fiancé is six foot three. I am **worried** that if he wears a top hat he will look enormous next to me.*

afraid 3	determined	nervous	suspicious
anxious	eager	optimistic	terrified
apprehensive	fearful	pessimistic	wary
confident	hopeful	petrified	worried
desperate	keen	scared	

8 THE 'AGREED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that two or more people or groups agree about whether something should happen or is true. These are reciprocal adjectives.

*Both sides are **agreed** that the plan should go ahead.*

agreed	unanimous
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9 THE 'INSISTENT' GROUP

These adjectives are used to indicate that someone says something in a very forceful way.

*He is **adamant** that he does not want to enter politics.*

*The government remained **insistent** that the war should disrupt civil society as little as possible.*

adamant	emphatic	insistent
categorical	explicit	
definite	firm 5	

10 THE 'CAREFUL' GROUP

These adjectives are used with the word *be* to tell someone to do something or to say that something should be done.

*Be **careful** that if your family goes through a difficult period you make quite sure the children understand exactly what is going wrong.*

*We must be **sure** that public money is spent wisely.*

careful	sure	vigilant
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11 THE 'LUCKY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the state of affairs referred to in the that-clause is desirable or not desirable from a particular person's point of view.

*I feel very **lucky** that I have had the chance to entertain so many people.*

*They were **unlucky** that we scored when we did.*

fortunate	lucky	unlucky
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12 THE 'CORRECT' GROUP

These adjectives are used to indicate that the information someone gives is correct.

*Am I **correct** that you didn't call the Stevens apartment before going there?*

correct	right
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85 ADJ wh

The adjective is followed by a finite *wh*-clause. Some adjectives are sometimes followed by a non-finite *wh-to-inf* clause.

	Adjective	wh-clause/wh-to-inf clause
They are	sceptical	whether the film will ever be completed.
I was	uncertain	how to begin.
I was	worried	what my husband might think.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'UNCERTAIN' GROUP
- 2 THE 'AWARE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'AFRAID' GROUP

1 THE 'UNCERTAIN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is not sure whether something is the case, or whether something should be done.

*We are really supported and encouraged to go into maths and physics but I'm not **sure** whether that's the same in other schools.*

*He was **uncertain** what his next move should be.*

In the case of *uncertain* and *unsure*, the adjective is sometimes followed by a wh-to-inf clause.

*The government is **unsure** what to do.*

(not) certain	sceptical	unsure
doubtful	(not) sure	
dubious	uncertain	

2 THE 'AWARE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is aware or unaware of something.

*Some spider owners, who keep them in glass cages, might not be **aware** how nasty their bite is.*

aware	unaware
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3 THE 'AFRAID' GROUP

These adjectives indicate the way someone feels about a possible event or situation.

*They're embarrassed; they are **afraid** what their neighbors and children will think.*

afraid	curious	worried
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86 ADJ to-inf

The adjective is followed by a to-infinitive clause.

Adjectives with this pattern are of two types. With some adjectives, the Subject of the main clause is different from the understood Subject of the to-infinitive clause. For example, in *His films were beautiful to look at*, it is *his films* that are beautiful, but it is an unnamed person or group who looks at the films. This is Type 1.

	Adjective	to-infinitive clause
He was	excellent	to work with.
Fish can be	fiddly	to cook.

With other adjectives, the two Subjects are the same. For example, in *He was surprised to receive a telephone call*, it is *he* who is surprised and *he* who receives the telephone call. This is Type 2.

	Adjective	to-infinitive clause
We would be	foolish	to ignore them.
Shelley was	overjoyed	to see me.

Groups 1-5 below are Type 1 adjectives. Groups 6-17 are Type 2 adjectives.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'PRETTY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'TERRIBLE' AND 'WONDERFUL' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CHEAP' AND 'EXPENSIVE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'BORING' AND 'INTERESTING' GROUP
- 5 THE 'ADEQUATE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ASTONISHED' GROUP
- 7 THE 'SORRY' GROUP
- 8 THE 'DELIGHTED' GROUP
- 9 THE 'UNWILLING' GROUP
- 10 THE 'WILLING' GROUP
- 11 THE 'QUICK' AND 'SLOW' GROUP
- 12 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP
- 13 THE 'SURE' GROUP
- 14 THE 'ABLE' GROUP
- 15 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP
- 16 THE 'LUCKY' AND 'UNLUCKY' GROUP
- 17 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'PRETTY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate the appearance, feel, or taste of something or someone. The verb in the to-infinitive clause is something such as *look at*, *touch*, or *eat*. It does not add anything to the meaning of the adjective.

*Watches have become less accurate, though more **attractive** to look at.*

*These cradles may be **beautiful** to look at, but they were not made to our current safety standards.*

*Healthy food can and should be **delicious** to eat.*

*Horses are **pretty** to look at, but I prefer something with a steering wheel and a brake.*

attractive	gorgeous	soft	unattractive
beautiful	pretty	stunning	
delicious	ravishing	ugly	

2 THE 'TERRIBLE' AND 'WONDERFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is good or bad in some way. The to-infinitive clause indicates what action is involved.

Both of us found the handle **convenient** to use because it pivots to give a choice of angle and height.

Water was scarce and becoming **dangerous** to drink.

The printing is bold and **easy** to read.

He was **excellent** to work with and deeply respected and liked by his juniors in the police force.

These machines need careful setting up and are **fiddly** to clean.

The car was **terrible** to park and manoeuvre, but not as cumbersome on the road as you'd think.

Children love to climb – trees, climbing frames and furniture are all **wonderful** to explore.

agreeable	fiddly	light 3.1	simple
amazing	fine 1.1	lovely	straightforward
awkward	good	magnificent	superb
brilliant 2	great 7	marvellous	terrible
clumsy	hard 2	messy	terrific
convenient	heavy	nice	time-consuming
dangerous	horrible	perfect	tough 5
demanding	ideal	plain 3	tricky
difficult	impossible	pleasant	uncomfortable
dreadful	inappropriate	pleasurable	wonderful
easy	inconvenient	quiet	
excellent	laborious	safe	

3 THE 'CHEAP' AND 'EXPENSIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has some kind of advantage or disadvantage, such as being easy to use, or expensive.

The television networks love these shows because they are **cheap** to make.

But children's homes are **expensive** to run and **difficult** to staff.

cheap	economical	inexpensive	uneconomic
costly	expensive	profitable	uneconomical

4 THE 'BORING' AND 'INTERESTING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate how someone reacts to something or someone. For example, tennis is **boring** to watch means that tennis is boring for the people watching it.

Such matches are **boring** to watch.

This book is easy and **interesting** to read.

She found some of the songs **painful** to write.

baffling	exciting	inspiring	tedious
boring	exhilarating	interesting	terrifying
comfortable	fascinating	painful 3,4	
depressing	fearsome	pleasing	
enjoyable	frustrating	satisfying	

5 THE 'ADEQUATE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something can be done with or to the thing you are talking about.

Many old age pensioners have no other source of income apart from their pension, and pension levels are not **adequate** to live on.

It is **available** to buy now on video.

But this means that a good deal of work may have to be done before the place is **fit** to live in.

adequate	fit	insufficient	sufficient
available	inadequate	ready	unfit

6 THE 'ASTONISHED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is surprised or puzzled by the event or situation indicated in the to-infinitive clause. The to-infinitive clause often indicates that someone hears, sees, or finds out something.

Passengers will be **astonished** to learn that the driver of a train cannot speak to them over the tannoy system in an emergency.

They were **puzzled** to find the kitchen door locked.

astonished	bemused	interested	puzzled
astounded	flabbergasted	intrigued	surprised

7 THE 'SORRY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is sad or angry because of the event or situation indicated in the to-infinitive clause. The to-infinitive clause often indicates that someone hears, sees, or finds out something.

She was very **angry** to find him still with the circus.

I'm **sorry** to hear he has died.

In the case of sorry, the adjective often introduces something that someone wants to say.

I'm **sorry** to have to tell you that Janet West is dead.

aghast	dismayed	furious	upset
angry	displeased	sad	
disappointed	distraught	sorry	
disconcerted	disturbed	unhappy	

8 THE 'DELIGHTED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is happy about the event or situation indicated in the to-infinitive clause.

You've got to be very **thankful** to win once, never mind twice.

In the case of *delighted*, *happy*, *pleased*, and *proud*, the adjective often introduces something that someone wants to say.

Speaking of food, I'm **delighted** to announce that Elizabeth Godwin of Worcestershire came first in our Christmas Cookery Competition.

I'm **pleased** to say that we're running on schedule.

amused	glad	overjoyed	thankful
chuffed	grateful	pleased	thrilled
content 2.1	gratified	privileged	
delighted	happy	proud	
ecstatic	honoured	relieved	

Adjectives

9 THE 'UNWILLING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is afraid of doing something, or does not want to do something.

A spokesman was **reluctant** to reveal the actual figures.

She has a very fiery personality and isn't **scared** to tackle things.

She had hurt me – I was **unwilling** to admit how deeply – and she had diminished my self-confidence.

afraid	frightened	reluctant	unprepared
ashamed	hesitant	scared	unready
disinclined	loath	terrified	unwilling

10 THE 'WILLING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone wants or is willing to do something.

He is most **anxious** to avoid appearing weak.

He now seems **keen** to return to active politics.

Everyone, he reflected, was **out** to get something for themselves.

We're **willing** to train youngsters from as young as seven.

Glad, interested and pleased only have this meaning when used with will be or would be, or when used to say what is generally the case.

'Always **glad** to help the police,' he said.

I'd be **interested** to see what other women thought about it.

agog	eager	inclined	prepared
ambitious	enthusiastic	interested	raring 2
anxious	frantic	keen	ready 3
concerned 2	game 10	minded	resolved
confident	glad	out 2.9	tempted
desperate	happy 4	pleased	unafraid
determined	hungry	poised	unashamed
disposed	impatient	predisposed	willing

11 THE 'QUICK' AND 'SLOW' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something quickly and willingly or slowly and unwillingly.

Howard Wilkinson was **quick** to volunteer for spying duties in Monte Carlo.

People are **slow** to learn but once they learn they don't forget.

quick	slow	swift
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12 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something will or may do something, or will not or may not do something.

This includes adjectives which indicate:

- that something will certainly or probably happen e.g. **certain**, **likely**

- that something often happens e.g. **apt**, **wont**
- that someone should do something e.g. **duty-bound**, **obligated**
- that something is intended to do something e.g. **built**, **calculated**

Note that the phrases *be bound to*, *be liable to*, *be meant to*, and *be sure to* are treated as phrasal modals in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary and the Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs.)

I'm **about** to take off on a three-week vacation to the eastern Caribbean.

Baby girls are **apt** to show fear of new things and novel situations much more easily than baby boys.

The Labour Party, he says, looks increasingly **certain** to win the next election.

I joined social work with high ideals and now feel **duty-bound** to stay in the job.

about 10	destined	liable 1,3	set 2.14
apt 2	doomed	likely	sure
bound	due 3	meant 2	unlikely
built	duty-bound	obligated	wont
calculated 1	fated	obliged	
(not) calculated 2	favoured	prone	
certain 1.2	guaranteed	ready 5	

13 THE 'SURE' GROUP

These adjectives are used to tell someone to do something.

When preparing your own food at home, be **sure** to check the list of ingredients carefully.

Careful is also used to indicate that someone makes sure they do something.

The Soviet leader was **careful** to stress that he was not calling for a return to what he described as an unrestricted dictatorship.

careful	sure
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14 THE 'ABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is or is not able or suitable to do something.

Note that the phrases *be able to* and *be unable to* are treated as phrasal modals in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary and the Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs.)

The lion, caught in a tree, had not been **able** to escape.

The term 'military history' is no longer **adequate** to describe such a vast area of study.

Most adults do not feel **competent** to deal with a medical emergency involving a child.

With around two-thirds of all adults **eligible** to vote, the contests are being seen as an important reflection of public opinion.

Her writing career alone may well be **enough** to shoot her to fame.

I knew the panic was unrealistic, but I was **helpless** to stop it.

At the moment, I am **ineligible** to play for Australia.

Both men were **unavailable** to comment.

Perhaps, in his twisted mind, her perfection is such that he is **unworthy** to utter her name.

able	equipped	incompetent	suitable
adequate	fit 1,10,12	ineligible	unable
appropriate	fitted	insufficient	unavailable
available	free	okay	unfit
capable	hard-pressed	powerless	unprepared
competent	helpless	present 2,1	unworthy
(not) cut-out	ill-equipped	ready 1,2	useless
eligible	ill-prepared	safe	worthy
enough	inadequate	sufficient	

15 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is good or bad, or right or wrong, in some way. The Subject is usually a human being.

This use is productive: any adjective that indicates an opinion of a person or what they do can be used in this pattern.

*You are **right** to say we are dealing with people who are feeling emotional.*

*I wasn't **stupid** to go there, and I knew what I was doing.*

These adjectives are often used with *would* to say whether or not someone should do something.

*I think you would be **foolish** to turn down an opportunity like this.*

*They would be **sensible** to say 'yes', but probably won't.*

bonkers	foolish	rash	stupid
brave	ill-advised	right 1,7	unwise
clever	insane	selfish	well-advised
correct	irresponsible	sensible	wise
crazy	mad 2	silly	wrong
daft	naive	smart 2	

16 THE 'LUCKY' AND 'UNLUCKY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something that happens to someone is good or bad.

*He was **lucky** to escape with his life.*

*Fans would say Damon was **unlucky** to lose by that one crucial point.*

fortunate	unfortunate
lucky	unlucky

17 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are two other adjectives which have this pattern.

*Frank says he's taught a thousand people how to fly, and all of them are still **alive** to tell the tale.*

*Members of the public will be **welcome** to attend the meetings in their area.*

alive	welcome
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Productive uses

1 A to-infinitive clause is often used after an adjective to mean 'in order to'. The adjectives often indicate that something is important or necessary, or any adjective

may be used in this way with *have to*, *must*, or *need*.

*Lips need to be **bright** to be noticed.*

*A car is **essential** to reach those wide open spaces.*

*The true Queensland is a land where you must be **strong** to survive.*

*A tripod is always **useful** to steady the camera.*

2 A to-infinitive clause following an adjective is sometimes used to say that an action shows that someone has a particular quality. The adjective is used with *must* or *have to*.

*Football clubs must be **mad** to pay millions of pounds for foreign players.*

3 See also Sections 77 and 78.

Other related pattern

ADJ n to-inf

The adjective is followed by a noun and a to-infinitive clause. See also Section 21.

	Adjective	noun	to-infinitive clause
This is an	expensive	material	to buy.
It remains a	pretty	place	to visit.

Most of the adjectives in groups 1-5 above also occur in this pattern.

*Fast is not an **adequate** word to describe it.*

*Queensland cannot afford to have a reputation as a **dangerous** place to visit.*

*This is a **painful** observation to make, but nonetheless true.*

*The corrosive effects of an uncontrolled deficit make the US an **unattractive** place to put their money.*

87 ADJ-ing

The adjective group is followed by an '-ing' clause.

	Adjective group	-ing clause
I was	daft	going into management.
I felt	guilty	having eight hours' sleep.
You're	so lucky	having all this money.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'COMFORTABLE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'CRAZY' GROUP
- 3 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'COMFORTABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate how someone feels when doing something. *Awful*, *awkward*, *bad*, *good*, *guilty*, and *terrible* are only used in this pattern when they follow the verb *feel*. With

feel, this use is productive: many adjectives indicating feelings are occasionally used with this pattern.

Are you **comfortable** delegating authority, or do you believe it is easier to just do it yourself?
I felt **good** seeing Gideon and Marla again.

This person is strongly affected by the appearance of things and will feel **unhappy** working or living in unpleasant surroundings.

awful	confident	happy	uneasy
awkward	content	nervous	unhappy
bad	good	terrible	
comfortable	guilty	uncomfortable	

2 THE 'CRAZY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something that a person does is foolish or unwise.

My family thought we were **crazy** travelling eleven miles to get a cat.
I couldn't help feeling **foolish** sitting at the small table.

crazy	foolish	silly
daft	mad	stupid

3 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

While Scully was **busy** trying to sort out the facts from the paranormal, Mulder found himself trapped.

I feel **fairly safe** living here.

busy	lucky	safe
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88 ADJ about n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *about* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause. These patterns are **ADJ about -ing** and **ADJ about wh**.

	Adjective	about	noun group/-ing/wh
I'm	glad	about	that.
Giorgio was	gloomy	about	the future.
She is	perplexed	about	what to do for him.
Gordon is being	stoical	about	having his leg amputated.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'PASSIONATE' AND 'COOL' GROUP
- 2 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'UNHAPPY' GROUP

- 4 THE 'PHILOSOPHICAL' GROUP
- 5 THE 'NERVOUS' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP
- 7 THE 'CURIOUS' GROUP
- 8 THE 'ARROGANT' GROUP
- 9 THE 'CYNICAL' AND 'SERIOUS' GROUP
- 10 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP
- 11 THE 'SPECIFIC' AND 'VAGUE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'APOLOGETIC' GROUP
- 13 THE 'SCATHING' AND 'CHARITABLE' GROUP
- 14 THE 'ARTICULATE' AND 'RETICENT' GROUP
- 15 THE 'HONEST' AND 'DISHONEST' GROUP
- 16 THE 'ENTERTAINING' GROUP
- 17 THE 'MARVELLOUS' GROUP
- 18 THE 'RUTHLESS' GROUP
- 19 THE 'CAREFUL' GROUP
- 20 THE 'FAIR' AND 'SELFISH' GROUP
- 21 THE 'ANALYTICAL' GROUP
- 22 THE 'AWARE' AND 'IGNORANT' GROUP
- 23 THE 'RIGHT' AND 'WRONG' GROUP

1 THE 'PASSIONATE' AND 'COOL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone likes someone or something very much or that they do not like them very much.

Keynes was notably **cool** about the idea.

Ann's friends were less **enthusiastic** about her plans.

She had a quiet sense of humour, was **passionate** about books and drama and had the wonderful gift of imparting that passion to her pupils.

He was handsome and women were **wild** about him it's said, but he had little interest in them.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause, especially in the case of *enthusiastic*, *fanatical*, *keen*, *mad*, and *passionate*.

At the end of a working day, Elizabeth is not **keen** about seeing people for dinner.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **ADJ about n -ing**.

I'm not **keen** about people like my mother being controlled by drugs but I can understand how it is necessary.

batty	daft	keen	unenthusiastic
bonkers	enthusiastic	mad 4	wild 11
cool 8	fanatical	passionate	
crazy	fervent	potty	

2 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone feels happy or optimistic about a situation.

The hosts, Robin and Sarah Cooper, were **cheerful** about the seemingly awful mess left in their lovely house.

She was not entirely **happy** about the civil marriage she and Gary had at her bridegroom's home.

The official acknowledged several problems, but said, 'I'm fairly **upbeat** about the prospects of resolving them.'

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause, especially in the case of comfortable, confident, happy, optimistic, positive, and proud.

You should also feel **confident** about expressing your views.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ about n-ing.

Mr Raymond said he was not **happy** about people having to move.

In the case of *good*, the adjective always follows the verb *feel*.

Do things that make you feel **good** about yourself.

bullish	confident	happy	proud
buoyant	easy	hopeful	rapturous
cheerful	ecstatic	joyful	rhapsodic
cheery	euphoric	light-hearted	secure
chirpy	glad	optimistic	thrilled
cocky	gleeful	pleased	upbeat
comfortable	good	positive	

3 THE 'UNHAPPY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is unhappy or pessimistic about a situation.

Dave was **bitter** about the fact that I wanted to leave.

Are you essentially **pessimistic** about the possibility of lasting love?

She was particularly **unhappy** about the sale of paintings worth millions of pounds.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause, especially in the case of desperate, heartbroken, miserable, pessimistic, sad, uncomfortable, uneasy, and unhappy.

Mrs Stagg said they were **sad** about leaving but were also looking ahead.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ about n-ing.

We are **disappointed** about Brian deciding not to come on this tour.

In the case of *bad*, the adjective always follows the verb *feel*.

At heart, she felt **bad** about what she was doing and made excuses not to attend church with her father.

anguished	disconsolate	hysterical	sick
bad	distraught	miserable	tearful
bearish	downbeat	morbid	uncomfortable
bitter	downcast	negative	uneasy
broken-hearted	gloomy	pessimistic	unhappy
defeatist	glum	restive	
desperate	grumpy	rueful	
disappointed	heartbroken	sad	

4 THE 'PHILOSOPHICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is calm and relaxed about a situation, or does not care about it.

I hope I never become **complacent** about injustice.

They are like the old gold prospectors, full of optimism about striking lucky, but **nonchalant** about the dangers.

Like all gardeners, Thelma has learned to be **philosophical** about setbacks, knowing that these, like the successes, are all an essential part of maintaining a garden.

Most smokers are **unconcerned** about the effect of constant smoking on their own health and that of other people.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

If that were a true picture of heaven, an awful lot of people would be **lukewarm** about going there.

The family seemed quite **philosophical** about being exiled.

apathetic	fatalistic	nonchalant	stoical
blasé	half-hearted	offhand	unconcerned
calm	incurious	patient	uncurlous
casual	indifferent	philosophical	unperturbed
complacent	insouciant	phlegmatic	
cool	lukewarm	relaxed	
dispassionate	neutral	stoic	

5 THE 'NERVOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone feels worried or fearful about a situation, particularly a possible situation in the future.

She is increasingly **nervous** about her future in the city she has grown to love.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause, especially in the case of afraid, anxious, apprehensive, cautious, fearful, frantic, leery, nervous, paranoid, squeamish, timid, wary, and worried.

If you feel **anxious** about leaving your child then a good solution is to stay and help until he feels happier about being left on his own.

I must confess that I was **nervous** and **wary** about meeting him.

Relaxation is good for people who are **worried** about flying.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ about n-ing.

He can become **fearful** about both of you assuming new roles in life.

afraid	frantic	neurotic	twitchy
anxious	insecure	panicky	uptight
apprehensive	jittery	paranoid	wary
cautious	jumpy	phobic	worried
chary	leery	reluctant	
edgy	nervous	tense	
fearful	nervy	timid	

6 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is angry about a situation.

They are **angry** about the conditions under which many calves and other animals are transported.

The residents were **furious** about a delay in providing an old people's home.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause, especially in the case of angry, furious, and resentful.

He may become **resentful** about having lost touch with his family.

The preposition **about** is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ about n-ing.

Australians were **angry** about companies selling their assets to foreigners.

angry	cross	irate	sore
annoyed	furious	livid	tetchy
apoplectic	indignant	resentful	

7 THE 'CURIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is curious or puzzled about a situation.

Doctors are perhaps even more **inquisitive** about human nature than laymen.

The preposition **about** is sometimes followed by a finite or non-finite wh-clause.

She did seem **curious** about why the dogs were wet when it hadn't been raining.

agog	inquisitive	suspicious
bemused	perplexed	
curious	puzzled	

8 THE 'ARROGANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone feels superior to someone else or the way they behave, or that someone appears to feel superior.

We were **arrogant** about our abilities to beat the competition.

Mainstream teachers have always been a bit **snooty** about English as a Foreign Language.

arrogant	scornful	snobbish	stuffy
contemptuous	smug	snobby	
elitist	sniffy	snooty	

9 THE 'CYNICAL' AND 'SERIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a range of other feelings that someone may have about a situation.

I do tend to be rather **cynical** about the oil industry.

I do feel **emotional** about animal suffering, but this doesn't mean I'm incapable of rational thought.

She had a lot to be **grateful** about, hadn't she?

The preposition **about** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Mr. Bates didn't seem in the least **hesitant** about sharing his problems.

If you're **serious** about improving your tennis, golf or climbing skills, get your hands on the Gripmaster.

Some people are **squeamish** about having needles inserted into their veins.

awkward	earnest	hard-nosed	jealous
bashful	emotional	hesitant	modest
cynical	fearless	humble	nostalgic
defensive	forgiving	impatient	possessive
diffident	grateful	intense	prickly

queasy	serious	squeamish	unabashed
sensitive	shy	touchy	vehement

10 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is sure or unsure about an idea or about a feeling, or shows this in the way they speak. We include here **unanimous**, which is a reciprocal adjective.

Sally's parents split up when she was in her teens. It is hardly surprising that she feels **ambivalent** about the idea of getting married herself.

'I am quite **certain** about my identity,' he said.

Many have been **doubtful** about the arguments on which this teaching is based.

A lot of people are very **sceptical** about viruses and think that maybe you are making it all up.

The preposition **about** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I had such a great marriage, I'm **iffy** about having a second.

In the case of **ambivalent**, **certain**, **definite**, **sceptical**, **sincere**, **sure**, **uncertain**, and **undecided**, the preposition is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

The press is still not **sure** about how good I am.

If you are **uncertain** about what is going to happen, contact the ward Sister to check.

adamant	definite	iffy	sure
agnostic	definitive	indecisive	unanimous
ambiguous	dogmatic	insistent	uncertain
ambivalent	doubtful	noncommittal	unconvinced
assertive	dubious	resolute	undecided
categorical	emphatic	sceptical	unequivocal
certain	equivocal	sincere	unsure
circumspect	hazy	skittish	

11 THE 'SPECIFIC' AND 'VAGUE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone says something clearly and precisely or unclearly and imprecisely.

Mr Green also challenged the government to be **clear** about its intentions.

Police were **vague** about the gunman's demands, saying he had asked to go to Paris and to speak to a government representative.

The preposition **about** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause, especially in the case of **specific**.

Larkin was absolutely **specific** about wanting the diaries destroyed.

In the case of **clear**, **explicit**, **precise**, **specific**, **unclear**, and **vague**, the preposition is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

Marcel is **specific** about what he wants.

The Green Revolution is among the environmental movement's most frequently cited villains. However, environmentalists are **unclear** about what else could have saved millions from starvation.

clear	hazy	mysterious	unambiguous
enigmatic	imprecise	plain	unclear
exact	inconclusive	precise	unspecific
explicit	lucid	specific	vague

12 THE 'APOLOGETIC' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone feels sorry for something they have done. They are often used in this pattern to indicate that someone apologizes for something. We include here *unapologetic*, *unashamed*, and *unrepentant*, which indicate that someone does not apologize.

Gary Witta is *unashamed about his influences*.

In the case of *apologetic*, *sheepish* and *unrepentant*, the preposition *about* is followed by an '-ing' clause.

This is her fourth appointment, and she's *apologetic about being 10 minutes late*.

Evans said he didn't feel *sheepish about collecting the trophy*.

Trish was *unrepentant about sharing her secrets with three million television viewers*.

apologetic	guilty	sheepish	unashamed
ashamed	remorseful	sorry	unrepentant
contrite	shamefaced	unapologetic	

13 THE 'SCATHING' AND 'CHARITABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone talks about a person or thing in a way that is complimentary to them or insulting to them.

Only two shoppers I interviewed were *charitable about the new government*.

She started being *sarcastic about me* to senior members of the team.

Modest about his own poetry, he was *scathing about other poets who*, in his opinion, wove webs of deceit around the business of crafting a good poem.

He was devastatingly *witty about his political opponents*.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ about n-ing.

They've been very *judgmental about me having left my son*: What kind of a person could I be to have done that?

abusive	critical	hostile	sarcastic
acerbic	cruel	hypercritical	scathing
affectionate	derogatory	insulting	snide
bitchy	diplomatic	ironic	snotty
blunt	dismissive	judgmental	tactful
catty	disparaging	kind	unkind
caustic	facetious	mean	unpleasant
ensorious	flippant	nasty	venomous
charitable	grudging	offensive	vicious
cheeky	harsh	overenthusiastic	vitriolic
churlish	horrible	polite	withering
complimentary	horrid	rude	witty

14 THE 'ARTICULATE' AND 'RETICENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone speaks openly about something or is unwilling to speak openly.

She is highly intelligent, and sometimes bitterly *articulate about her situation*.

Then, to my surprise – for she is notoriously *coy about her private life* – she started talking about her marriage.

She is disarmingly *frank about her strengths and her failings*.

He's *indiscreet about things that don't matter*.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Do you feel that your staff can be fairly *open about admitting failure*?

The government has told the scientists to remain *silent about their work*.

I'm very *upfront about being happily married*.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause, particularly in the case of *coy*, *reticent*, *vocal*, and *vociferous*. When *reticent* is used in this way, it often means that someone is unwilling to do something.

Government officials have been *reticent about giving details of exactly what did happen*.

In the case of *articulate*, *evasive*, *forthcoming*, *reticent*, *secretive*, and *silent*, the preposition is sometimes followed by a wh-clause.

She was *evasive about what she wanted help with*.

Dorothy was not very *forthcoming about what she wanted to do*.

Everyone has been trying to get into the new Jones house to see what they've done but they have been very *secretive about what has been going on there*.

articulate	effusive	open	straightforward
blatant	evasive	outspoken	tactful
brazen	forthcoming	public	uninhibited
cagey	forthright	quiet	upfront
candid	frank	reticent	vocal
coy	indiscreet	secretive	vociferous
direct	laconic	silent	
discreet	mute	sneaky	

15 THE 'HONEST' AND 'DISHONEST' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone behaves or speaks in an honest or dishonest way with respect to someone or something.

I was not aware that I was quite *dishonest about my feelings*, even with the people closest to me.

Practise being *honest about your feelings* and help your family to do the same.

dishonest	honest	truthful
genuine	hypocritical	uncompromising

16 THE 'ENTERTAINING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone talks in a way that is judged to be good or bad for some reason (e.g. *amusing* or *boring*).

Irish writer Roddy Doyle is marvellously *entertaining about ordinary things happening to ordinary people in ordinary places*.

amusing	convincing	entertaining	illuminating
boring	eloquent	funny	informative

Adjectives

17 THE 'MARVELLOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone reacts to a situation in a way that is judged to be good or bad. They are used in this way particularly in spoken English.

*I don't want to be **heavy** about this but we'd need to define 'epic' I think before we could have a meaningful discussion on this.*

*They've been very supportive – they've been **marvellous** about it.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*My dad was a bit **funny** about letting kids run up and down in the house – he was very strict in that sense.*

adult 4	fine 3	heavy 17	okay
beastly	foolish	lovely	reasonable
brave	funny 2	marvellous	sweet 8
brilliant	good 16	mature 4	
cool 7,9	gracious	nice	
excellent	great 7	odd	

18 THE 'RUTHLESS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something in a determined or consistent way. Sometimes this is judged to be a good thing, sometimes it is judged to be a bad thing.

*You must undertake to be completely **reliable** about whatever you agree to do.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*You should be very **aggressive** about marketing your firm.*

*Patients may have to be **firm** about asking for drug treatment.*

*He is someone who is **ruthless** about correcting faults in his own work and in others.*

adventurous	consistent	reckless	stubborn
aggressive	firm	relentless	zealous
authoritarian	inflexible	reliable	
belligerent	militant	rigorous	
bold	pushy	ruthless	

19 THE 'CAREFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is careful or careless about something they do or with respect to a particular situation.

*To help prevent infection, be extra **careful** about personal hygiene.*

*Janet could not afford to be **cavalier** about money, but she knew she could pay the rent and still afford the luxuries she enjoyed.*

*His letters do not pay attention to detail and can also be rather **sloppy** about presentation.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*Be particularly **fastidious** about washing your hands before touching food.*

*They are **strict** about guarding their privacy.*

In the case of *careful*, *choosy*, *flexible*, and *particular* the preposition is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

*I'm still just as **particular** about what I wear and interested in fashion.*

careful	flexible	meticulous	punctilious
careless	fussy	obsessional	responsible
cavalier	indulgent	obsessive	scrupulous
choosy	irresponsible	particular 4	selective
compulsive	lax	permissive	sloppy
conscientious	lazy	pernickety	strict
fastidious	lenient	picky	tough
finicky	manic	prudish	vigilant

20 THE 'FAIR' AND 'SELFISH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a range of other ways that people behave.

*We are actually bound by our professional ethics to be **fair** about what we find.*

*I said, 'Well this is the price that's been quoted and the quote stands for thirty days.' Because I thought I ought to be **professional** about it.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*Was he quite **generous** about giving you money and so on?*

*Local communities can be coldly **selfish** about keeping out the less attractive things that cities require – mental homes, prisons, new housing developments.*

In the case of *sensible*, the preposition is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

*Parkside offers advice for change in life style, but is **sensible** about what is practical.*

competitive	insensitive	selfish	sympathetic
conservative	moralistic	sensible	tolerant
evangelical	precious 5	sensitive	unsympathetic
fair	prescriptive	sophisticated	
generous	professional	supportive	

21 THE 'ANALYTICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate the way that someone thinks, or the way that they approach an issue. We include here adjectives such as *clever* and *stupid*, which indicate that the way that someone thinks is judged to be intelligent or unintelligent.

*I wasn't yet **analytical** about gardens – I didn't understand what a grand garden like Bodnant told you about the social position of the people who built it.*

*The agency people are very **clever** about the way they question you.*

*She is highly **intelligent** about the industry she has made her own.*

*It was bad enough him being **stupid** about business matters, but the trouble was he was also **stupid** about real life.*

ambitious	intelligent	rational	silly
analytical	inventive	realistic	smart
clear-eyed	literal	reflective	soppy
clever	logical	reverential	starry-eyed
discerning	naïve	rigid	stupid
discriminating	objective	romantic	subjective
dumb	perceptive	sanguine	thoughtful
forgetful	practical	self-conscious	unrealistic
gullible	pragmatic	sentimental	wise
idealistic	puritanical	shrewd	

22 THE 'AWARE' AND 'IGNORANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone knows or does not know about something.

Usually I'm so pathetically **ignorant** about movies that it's embarrassing.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

Walsh is painfully **aware** about how long his investigation has taken.

aware	conscious	knowledgeable
clueless	ignorant	uninformed

23 THE 'RIGHT' AND 'WRONG' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone's opinion about something is right or wrong.

It will be impossible to be anything like **accurate** about time of death.

'I think they've got about ten thousand haven't they now.' 'I may be **wrong** about those figures but it's something like that.'

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an *-ing* clause, particularly in the case of right and wrong.

I don't think Sarah's **right** about getting another job when the boys are so young.

accurate	right
correct	wrong

89 ADJ against n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *against* and a noun group.

	Adjective	against	noun group
Cream is also	helpful	against	a dry flaky skin.
We are	helpless	against	the guns of the soldiers.
The floor stones were	icy	against	his bare feet.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'EFFECTIVE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DEFENCELESS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SAFE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'VISIBLE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'SUCCESSFUL' GROUP
- 6 THE 'STEADY' GROUP
- 7 THE 'DEDUCTIBLE' GROUP
- 8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'EFFECTIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something protects someone or something against harm, or that something fails to protect them.

The findings may enable researchers to develop new drugs that would be **effective** against tuberculosis.

The vital first step is an accurate diagnosis, because a drug that clears up one kind of headache may prove **useless** against another.

active	good	ineffective	useful
effective	helpful	protective	useless

2 THE 'DEFENCELESS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something cannot defend themselves against harm.

The Celts were left in possession of Britain but almost **defenseless** against the impending Anglo-Saxon attack.

He appears **powerless** against the corrupt politicians.

defenceless	impotent	vulnerable
defenseless	powerless	
helpless	unprotected	

3 THE 'SAFE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something cannot be harmed by something.

The houses had also to be made **proof** against flies, snakes, scorpions and mosquitoes.

Other doubts are whether the tunnel could be made **safe** against terrorism or would be made **safe** against accidents.

proof	safe	secure
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4 THE 'VISIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone is noticeable because they make a contrast with something else either in appearance or in the way they feel.

A buzzard was circling above the rock-face, **black** against the brightness.

The air was surprisingly **cool** against her skin.

The rocket was barely **visible** against the snow-covered hills.

black	damp	luminous	wet
bright	dark	pale	white
cold	icy	visible	
cool	invisible	warm	

5 THE 'SUCCESSFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something plays a successful part in a fight or competition.

I've been **successful** against their bowlers every time I've played against them.

brilliant	impressive
good	successful

Adjectives

6 THE 'STEADY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that one currency has a high or low value relative to another, or that its value does not change relative to another.

The dollar was a cent **higher** against the yen at Friday's closing rate.
The pound was **steady** against both the German mark and the dollar.
Recently, the American buck has been **weak** against the yen and the D-mark.

firm	stable	weak
high	steady	
low	strong	

7 THE 'DEDUCTIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something such as a sum of money can be set against another sum of money.

Have you invested in any unquoted companies that have made losses? If so, claim it as a loss that is **deductible** against income tax.

deductible	redeemable	refundable
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8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

He became even more **outspoken** against the death penalty in the years after his illness.
To help you get started, here's a 10p coupon **valid** against your next purchase.

biased	valid	weighted
bitter	vigilant	
outspoken	violent	

90 ADJ as n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *as* and a noun group.

	Adjective	as	noun group
He's proved absolutely	ideal	as	the captain.
The legend has become	necessary	as	a source of pride.
These are quite	popular	as	indoor plants.

The adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FAMOUS' GROUP
- 2 THE 'MARVELLOUS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ALLOWABLE' GROUP
- 5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'FAMOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is known to be something, or can or cannot be perceived to be something. We include here *manifest*, which indicates that something makes itself known.

Birmingham is **famous** as the home of the English industrial revolution.
In the corridor were four dirty, ragged bundles, just **identifiable** as human beings.
According to Philo, God's creative power was initially **manifest** as the Word of God.
Christmas is **notorious** as the best time to steal from shops and shoppers.
It was an absolute wreck – **unrecognisable** as an aircraft.

familiar	manifest	recognizable	unrecognizable
famous	notorious	renowned	
identifiable	prominent	unknown	

2 THE 'MARVELLOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is judged to be good or bad in a particular role.

His advice is to concentrate on making science in Britain **attractive** as a career for young people.
We left for New York feeling sad and **inadequate** as parents.
The death penalty has proven **worthless** as a solution to the problem of violent crime.

acceptable	ineffective	popular	useless
adequate	invaluable	satisfactory	valid
attractive	irrelevant	suitable	valuable
effective	meaningless	unchallenged	viable
helpful	misleading	unsuitable	welcome
inadequate	obsolete	useful	worthless

3 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important or unusual in some respect.

Mercator was more **important** as a mathematician than as an astronomer.
The site is considered **significant** as the second landing Captain Cook made in Australia, in May, 1770.

crucial	necessary	significant	vital
essential	notable	unique	
important	noticeable	unusual	

4 THE 'ALLOWABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is possible according to the law or a set of rules.

Video recordings can also be useful – but may not always be **allowable** as evidence.
An individual had been placed on a salt-free diet by his physician. The additional charge made by restaurants for preparing such meals was **deductible** as a medical expense.

allowable	deductible	taxable
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5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are two other adjectives which have this pattern.

He remained **active** as a consultant and researcher for several years.

A Bill making women **eligible** as MPs received the Royal Assent in 1918.

active eligible

Other related patterns

the ADJ as n

The adjective follows the determiner *the*. Only one adjective, *same*, has this pattern.

Is pop music **the same** as rock music?

'His thoughts were exactly **the same** as mine,' Stanley said.

The preposition *as* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Providing the money is not **the same** as agreeing to participate in a project.

Being a loner is not **the same** as being lonely or shy.

Particularly in spoken English, the pattern ADJ as n is sometimes used instead of *the ADJ as n*.

'What will you have?' she asked, pouring herself a tonic water. **'Same as you.'**

As is also sometimes followed by a finite clause or by a prepositional phrase.

The method of application will be essentially **the same as** in previous Government share sales.

The season precinct pass for 1995 will cost **the same as** it did in 1994.

His strengths as a manager are **the same as** they were as a player.

I've just had my hair cut off and now it's **the same as** when I was 17.

91 ADJ as to wh

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *as to* and a finite *wh*-clause or a non-finite *wh*-to-inf clause. The preposition is sometimes followed by a noun group. This pattern is ADJ as to n.

	Adjective	as to	wh-clause/noun group
You may be	confused	as to	what to do next.
They were	doubtful	as to	the success of the plot.
They are	ignorant	as to	how the stock market operates.
She was	puzzled	as to	what motivated him.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'UNCERTAIN' GROUP
- 2 THE 'CURIOUS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'WORRIED' GROUP

4 THE 'DIVIDED' GROUP

5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'UNCERTAIN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is certain or, more commonly, uncertain about a situation, or that they know or do not know about it.

Scientists are not at all **clear** as to what is going on in the Earth's crust.

A trifle **uncertain** as to what to do for the best, she decided to go in.

The preposition *as to* is sometimes followed by a noun group.

The two species of lemur belong to a distinct family, but zoologists are still **uncertain** as to their closest relatives.

Clearly athletics as a professional sport is still in its infancy and is **unsure** as to the best way of presenting itself.

certain	doubtful	sure	undecided
clear	hazy	unaware	unsure
clueless	ignorant	uncertain	vague
confused	informed	unclear	

2 THE 'CURIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is puzzled or interested by something.

We were naturally **curious** as to why our father's family had black, curly hair and a darker complexion.

I pause, **intrigued** as to how a Serbian church became part of such a quaint English village.

The preposition *as to* is sometimes followed by a noun group.

He brought us here on purpose. I confess I am **baffled** as to his reason.

at a loss	bewildered	intrigued	puzzled
baffled	curious	mystified	
bemused	fascinated	perplexed	

3 THE 'WORRIED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is worried about something.

I suddenly thought of my husband and children and was **worried** as to how my death would affect them.

The preposition *as to* is sometimes followed by a noun group.

I naturally enough am **concerned** as to her command of the English language.

apprehensive concerned worried

4 THE 'DIVIDED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a group of people cannot agree about something. They are reciprocal adjectives.

While they may be united on the ultimate goal, they are badly **divided** as to how to get there.

Adjectives

divided split

5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

It's essential to be very, very **careful** as to how these groups are handled.

'This country now has no charms for me,' he said, 'and I am perfectly **indifferent** as to what part of the world I may go to.'

The preposition as to is sometimes followed by a noun group.

The poem is **ambiguous** as to the outcome of the raid.

There is a moral system, but it is simply **silent** as to the problem at hand.

You can, if you wish, be more **specific** as to your future.

ambiguous	indifferent	silent
careful	sceptical	specific

92 ADJ at n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of at and a noun group. The preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ at -ing.

	Adjective	at	noun group / -ing clause
She's	excellent	at	getting people to do things.
Sydney was	furious	at	the treatment he had received.
He was really	mad	at	me.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'GOOD' GROUP
- 2 THE 'NERVOUS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP

1 THE 'GOOD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something well or badly. We include here *slow*, which indicates that someone does something reluctantly or with difficulty, and *new*, which indicates that someone has little experience of doing something.

'And looking back I think I partly became very **bad** at maths 'cos I needed to be **bad** at something.'

Her mother was **clever** at many things; her movements were neat and deft and quick.

John is **new** at this. He's been on the job for only about a month now.

'He's **useless** at sport, I mean absolutely no ability with a ball - cannot hit a ball with a bat or kick it - utterly useless.'

The preposition at is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

She was **good** at raising money and did a very good job with the finances.

People are **poor** at recognising whether a flash of light occurs in their left or their right eye.

You are not **slow** at giving your opinions, but do not expect to meet with total approval.

adept	expert	new	successful
bad	good	okay	superb
brilliant	great	poor	terrible
clever	hopeless	practised	terrific
competent	incompetent	proficient	unsuccessful
effective	inept	skillful	useless
efficient	lousy	skilled	
excellent	marvellous	slow	

2 THE 'NERVOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone reacts to a situation or to an idea in some way, for example, by being surprised, happy, or unhappy.

Half the people in the dining-room were staring at them, delightfully **amused** at this public quarrel between the two who were thought to be the most reserved couple in Washington.

Some people looked quite **horrified** at the idea of reading a new book.

He professed himself **nervous** at the prospect of making a speech in honour of Frank.

Hearing divorced people talk, I am **sad** at the overwhelming bitterness of their words.

The preposition at is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

She felt **guilty** at having been spared when so many others were dying.

'I was not very **happy** at being referred to as a toad.'

Bernard was **unhappy** at having to have his picture taken.

aghast	bemused	heartbroken	puzzled
agog	bitter	horrified	sad
alarmed	disappointed	hysterical	sick
amused	disgusted	impatient	surprised
anxious	dismayed	jubilant	thrilled
appalled	displeased	nervous	uneasy
ashamed	distraught	overjoyed	unhappy
astonished	guilty	perturbed	
astounded	happy	pleased	

3 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is angry about a situation or an idea.

Paul is very **angry** at the way he has been treated.

I was **furious** at the ludicrous idea of rising at 3.30 in the morning for birdsong.

The preposition at is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Benny, meanwhile, was very **angry** at being left virtually penniless in New York.

The noun group following the preposition sometimes indicates a person instead of a situation. The adjectives *mad* and *pissed* are often used in this way. The adjectives *angry*, *annoyed*, and *furious* are sometimes used in this way. *Pissed* is more often used in this way in American English than in British English.

Sometimes you get **mad** at each other but you are still friends.

'I just want to know what happened. Like, why was she **pissed** at you?'

angry	exasperated	indignant	outraged
annoyed	furious	irate	pissed ²
disgruntled	incensed	mad ³	resentful

Productive use

A prepositional phrase consisting of *at* and an **amount** is used after a **comparative** adjective to indicate the price of something, as in *Tesco's salmon steaks are 86p cheaper at £3.79 per pound*. The adjective often follows a verb such as *close*, *end*, or *open*, either immediately or after a noun group (see section 82). This is often used to indicate the price of shares as in *British Gas ended higher at 215p... Electricity ended the week around 18 per cent lower at 608p... The shares ended the day 3p stronger at 65p*.

93 ADJ between pl-n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *between* and a **plural noun group**.

	Adjective	between	plural noun group
Early Homo Erectus was	intermediate	between	modern human and ape.
The rate is not very	variable	between	clinics.

The adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'INDETERMINATE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'MOBILE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'EQUIDISTANT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CONFIDENTIAL' GROUP
- 5 THE 'UNDECIDED' GROUP

1 THE 'INDETERMINATE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the nature of something is not clear or fixed.

Thus writing is ambiguous, indeterminate between good and evil, poison and cure.

indeterminate **variable**

2 THE 'MOBILE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something moves or can be moved in some way.

Labour is almost three times more mobile between American states than within individual EU countries.

divisible **mobile**
interchangeable **transferable**

3 THE 'EQUIDISTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is between two other things, usually halfway

between them.

This point lies at the crown of the head at a point equidistant between the ears.

equidistant **intermediate**

4 THE 'CONFIDENTIAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is confidential.

Nobody involved with the book would discuss how much Simpson was paid. 'It is confidential between the publisher and ourselves.'

confidential **private**

5 THE 'UNDECIDED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone cannot or does not choose between two things.

Her husband-to-be was for some time undecided between the state of matrimony and a vocation to the priesthood.

neutral **undecided**

94 ADJ by n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *by* and a noun group.

	Adjective	by	noun group
Evan was	bemused	by	his fans' reactions.
Organization dues are	deductible	by	a member.
Do not be	hamstrung	by	convention.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ACHIEVABLE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'FINE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'ASTONISHED' GROUP
- 4 THE 'HIDEBOUND' GROUP
- 5 THE 'AVAILABLE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ACCESSIBLE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'RECOGNIZABLE' GROUP
- 8 THE 'UNAFFECTED' GROUP
- 9 THE 'HIGHER' GROUP
- 10 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ACHIEVABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something may be or must be done by someone. The noun

group following the preposition *by* indicates a person or a group of people.

*Success at embroidery requires no special gift or talent. Rather, it is **achievable** by anyone who is willing to work hard and patiently.*

*The Community Charge is a municipal tax normally **payable** by all students, whether British or of any other nationality.*

achievable	enforceable	redeemable
attainable	payable	
deductible	recoverable	

2 THE 'FINE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a situation is judged to be acceptable. The noun group following the preposition *by* indicates a person, and it is usually a personal pronoun such as *me*, *them*, or *us*.

*He still can't remember my name – calls me 'mate', which is **fine** by me.*

all right	fine
cool	okay

3 THE 'ASTONISHED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone reacts in some way to a person, a thing, or a situation. The noun group following the preposition *by* indicates the person, thing, or situation that causes the reaction.

*I stood utterly **astonished** by what I'd done.*

*Like their fellow Europeans and even worse-afflicted Americans, the British are **exasperated** by rising crime.*

*Montagu was extremely **impressed** by the splendours of the French court.*

*Most of my friends are married and a lot of women feel **threatened** by single women and think they're about to run off with their husband.*

*We were particularly **worried** by the fact that you and your father had been known to mix socially with Marxist terrorists in north Africa.*

abashed	daunted	intrigued	unconcerned
absorbed	disappointed	moved	unconvinced
alarmed	disgruntled	obsessed	undaunted
amused	disgusted	perturbed	undeterred
annoyed	disheartened	pleased	undismayed
appalled	dismayed	preoccupied	unimpressed
astonished	downcast	puzzled	unmoved
astounded	downhearted	smitten	unnerved
awestruck	dumbstruck	spellbound	unperturbed
bedazzled	exasperated	stricken	unswayed
bemused	fascinated	surprised	unworried
concerned	flabbergasted	threatened	uplifted
confused	heartbroken	thrilled	upset
convinced	heartened	thunderstruck	worried
cowed	impressed	unabashed	

4 THE 'HIDEBOUND' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is prevented from acting freely, or not prevented from acting freely. The noun group following the preposition *by* indicates the thing or

situation that might or does prevent free action.

*Most of the tourists who come are culturally hungry and educated and not **hidebound** by English traditions.*

*She had a naive belief that things go best if businessmen are allowed to make money **unhampered** by any kind of regulations.*

encumbered	hidebound	uncluttered	unhampered
hamstrung	overburdened	unencumbered	untrammelled

5 THE 'AVAILABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something can be done. The noun group following the preposition *by* indicates how it can be done. Most of the adjectives in this group are related to verbs. For example, if an illness is *curable*, this means you can *cure* it. However, we include here *available* which is not related to a verb but which indicates that something can be obtained.

*Harvest Ale is **available** by mail order at £5 for two bottles.*

*Acts of violence will always be **explainable** by arguments about urban deprivation, poverty and educational underachievement.*

In the case of *achievable*, *attainable*, *available*, and *obtainable*, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*Victory would be only **achievable** by reducing the city to rubble.*

achievable	curable	obtainable
attainable	explainable	preventable
available	explicable	treatable

6 THE 'ACCESSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a place can or cannot be reached by a particular mode of transport. The noun group following the preposition *by* indicates the mode of transport.

*With more than 150 shops under one roof, and easily **accessible** by bus, car or train, the Bull Ring attracts over 400,000 shoppers each week.*

accessible	inaccessible	reachable
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7 THE 'RECOGNIZABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something can easily be seen or recognized.

*Her designs are instantly **recognisable** by her use of fascinating shapes, unusual stones and dramatic colours.*

*These illnesses are **manifest** by a wide variety of symptoms from paranoid delusions to total withdrawal into silence.*

detectable	evident	manifest
distinguishable	identifiable	recognizable

There are three other adjectives with a similar meaning which are mainly used in phrases indicating that something is noticeable because it is not there.

*In the glossy Festival brochure, two other literary figures were **conspicuous** by their absence.*

conspicuous notable noticeable

8 THE 'UNAFFECTED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is not affected by something else.

She remains blissfully **unaffected** by all of these things.

unaffected untainted untouched

9 THE 'HIGHER' GROUP

These adjectives are comparative or superlative adjectives indicating that someone or something has more of a quality than something else, or than it had before. The noun group following the preposition *by* is an amount. This pattern is ADJ *by* amount.

In Paris, the dollar is **higher** by a cent and a quarter.

You could be **richer** by up to £10,000 playing our fabulous Midas Touch game.

fastest lower shorter younger
higher older stronger
lighter richer weaker

10 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives that have this pattern. The adjective *guilty* is found only in the phrase *guilty by association*.

Rosabal would be branded a traitor and she would be **guilty** by association.

In a more superstitious society, I might have been diagnosed as a child **possessed** by the devil.

Tina got **pregnant** by one of Ike's musicians and had a baby boy.

The number of crimes **punishable** by death is being reduced from 34 to 11 and the accused's right to be defended by a lawyer will now be restored.

The lighting and sound was **unmatched** by any I have seen this year.

He'd counted on getting away **unseen** by anybody, but as he came through the last copse before the plain, he saw three men approaching from the south.

guilty pregnant unrelieved unsupported
overrun punishable unrivalled
possessed unmatched unseen

There are a number of other adjectives that have the pattern ADJ *by* amount.

The account is **overdrawn** by £100 3 days each month.

In each case, simple subtraction of the two meter readings gave a result which was **wrong** by 10,000 units.

better overdrawn underpaid
divisible overspent wrong

95 ADJ for n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *for* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ *for* -ing.

	Adjective	for	noun group / -ing clause
Wooden furniture is	appropriate	for	most settings.
He is	renowned	for	having a hot temper.
We're	hungry	for	success.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'SUITABLE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'READY' GROUP
- 3 THE 'EAGER' GROUP
- 4 THE 'FAMOUS' GROUP
- 5 THE 'GOOD' GROUP
- 6 THE 'RESPONSIBLE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'AFRAID' GROUP
- 8 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP
- 9 THE 'COMPULSORY' GROUP
- 10 THE 'VITAL' GROUP
- 11 THE 'USEFUL' GROUP
- 12 THE 'PUSHED' GROUP
- 13 THE 'GUILTY' GROUP
- 14 THE 'DESTINED' GROUP
- 15 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'SUITABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is suitable for a particular purpose, treatment, or person, or is not suitable.

They were not **eligible** for government benefits.

Motor-driven cylinder mowers are **ideal** for use on ornamental lawns.

With so many moisturisers on the market, how do you choose the one that's **right** for you?

The event is not **suitable** for children under 10 years.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Antique shops sometimes have beautiful Victorian beam scales, which are **fine** for weighing small amounts.

Citizens of Monrovia are now using well water, not usually considered **fit** for drinking.

A tall storage unit is **perfect** for hiding ironing boards when not in use.

Cut out is usually used with a negative.

I fear I'm not **cut out** for detection.

acceptable	eligible	good	ineligible
adequate	enough	great	insufficient
appropriate	equipped	ideal	marvellous
apt	excellent	ill-equipped	perfect
brilliant	fine	ill-prepared	qualified
cut out	fit 9,10	inappropriate	right

sufficient	tailor-made	unqualified	wrong
suitable	unfit 2,3	unsuitable	

These adjectives also have the pattern ADJ n for n: *acceptable, appropriate, excellent, fit, great, ideal, inappropriate, insufficient, marvellous, right, suitable, unsuitable.*

Is crime a suitable subject for art?

He was the right man for the job.

2 THE 'READY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is ready or available for something, or is not ready or available.

Entry clearance is granted by the Home Office only when it is satisfied that the child is legally available for adoption.

Whether or not you believe the prediction, experts agree this area is due for a major earthquake.

We are poised for victory.

His highly-experienced team is ready for action.

In the case of *available, due, open, overdue, ready, and ripe*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

No other bit of the budget is so ripe for cutting.

alert	game 10	prepared 2	unprepared 1
available	open	ready 1,2	
due 6	overdue	ripe	
free	poised	unavailable	

3 THE 'EAGER' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone wants something.

'When the job came through I was really desperate for money,' she said.

Across the country, people are eager for a president who will do what it takes to create new jobs.

Whilst the people are impatient for change, the interim government has to ask the permission of the King first.

agog	desperate	hopeful	mad
ambitious	eager	hungry 3	nostalgic
anxious	greedy	impatient	ready 4
avid	homesick	keen	thirsty 2

4 THE 'FAMOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is famous or special in some way.

He is famous for his witty approach to design.

The whole organization has been remarkable for its discipline.

With all of these adjectives except *unmatched*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The pop world is notorious for discarding its stars for newer models.

celebrated	known 3	noteworthy	unmatched
famed	legendary	notorious	unsurpassed
famous	notable	remarkable	well-known
infamous	noted	renowned	

5 THE 'GOOD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something benefits or harms someone or something.

Carson believes such a move could prove disastrous for British racing.

Sunshine is good for you – in moderation.

Takeovers of regional electricity companies have certainly been profitable for shareholders.

advantageous	damaging	fortunate	lucky
auspicious	dangerous	good 9	lucrative
bad	disastrous	healthy	profitable
beneficial	fatal	helpful 3	safe
catastrophic	favourable	instructive	unfortunate
costly	fine	lethal	unhealthy

Most of these adjectives also have the pattern ADJ n for n.

September was a disastrous month for most firms.

This year the Midwest is also expected to be a lucrative market for retailers since economic recovery has been stronger in that region.

6 THE 'RESPONSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is responsible for something.

Everybody is accountable for the decisions they make.

For the law is unequivocal: the Home Secretary is responsible for the running of our prisons.

In the case of *liable* and *responsible*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

In Hunter's Disease, the gene responsible for making a specific enzyme is either missing or damaged.

accountable	liable 3
answerable 2	responsible

7 THE 'AFRAID' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is worried about what might happen to someone or something.

She was afraid for her son.

'I am worried for the safety of other kids,' she said.

afraid 2	fearful
concerned	worried

8 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone sympathizes with someone else. We include here *ambitious*, which indicates that someone wants someone else to do well.

He's had a great career and I'm happy for him.
I feel sorry for those kids.

ambitious	happy	thrilled
delighted	sad	
glad	sorry	

9 THE 'COMPULSORY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something must be done by a particular category of person. We include here *optional*, which indicates that something need not be done.

Chess is now compulsory for every school student in New Jersey.
The scheme is optional for publishers.

compulsory	obligatory
mandatory	optional

10 THE 'VITAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important or necessary, or not. The noun group after *for* may refer to the result of having that thing, or the person or thing that would benefit from it.

Visitors last Monday were able to see that state-of-the-art facilities are not necessary for success.
Ensuring that all calls are professionally and efficiently answered is vital for small businesses.

With all of these adjectives except *unnecessary*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Oxygen is essential for keeping skin young because it activates cell division and regeneration.

critical	indispensable	vital
crucial	necessary	
essential	unnecessary	

11 THE 'USEFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is useful or convenient, or not.

It is the most elegant and comfortable of all the Hong Kong hotels, and is extremely convenient for the airport.
The new device may be useful for car navigation and military surveillance.

With all of these adjectives except *usable*, the preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

My little knife with a curved blade is also invaluable for preparing food.
They are useless for quenching your thirst and loaded with calories besides.

convenient	inconvenient	usable	valuable
handy	invaluable	useful	
impractical	practical	useless	

2 THE 'PUSHED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does not have enough of something, especially time or money.

I could go on talking to you all afternoon. But I'm afraid I'm a bit pushed for time.

pressed	pushed	strapped
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3 THE 'GUILTY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone feels grateful or sorry for something.

I hugged her afterward and told her I was sorry for all that had happened.

The preposition *for* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

We are grateful for being alerted to the problem and are correcting the accounts.

Guilt always occurs with the verb *feel*.

I felt guilty for disturbing his solitude.

apologetic	guilty	thankful
grateful	sorry	

14 THE 'DESTINED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has a purpose or is going to a particular place.

After winning in Toronto, she boarded an aircraft bound for Boston instead of her home in Florida.

He issued an instruction that work computers were meant for work-related matters only.

bound	destined
built	meant

15 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

I'm going to be late for work.

Joining them will be their daughters Kate, 29, and 31-year-old Bara - short for Barbara - who is flying in from Los Angeles.

The ticket is valid for a year.

doubtful	exchangeable	payable	short
early	late	redeemable	valid

Productive uses

1 A prepositional phrase beginning with *for* is often used after an adjective which indicates what an experience is like for someone, as in *This is very distressing for Carol* and *Learning to write should be exciting for your child, not stressful*.

2 A prepositional phrase beginning with *for* is often used after an adjective indicating a quality. The noun group following *for* indicates people who are affected by the quality,

Adjectives

as in *The way the rules work are different for each person, and This sort of sum is affordable for most people.*

- 3 A prepositional phrase beginning with *for* is used after adjectives such as *good, mature, small, tall, and young* to indicate a factor that qualifies your statement, as in *I am small for my age, He is young for a political leader, or Preoccupation with appearance was judged as normal for a healthy woman.*

Other related patterns

ADJ for n to-inf

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for*, and a *to*-infinitive clause.

	ADJ	for	noun group	to-infinitive clause
He was	eager	for	our talks	to begin.
Be	prepared	for	this	to take time.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'KEEN' GROUP
- 2 THE 'READY' GROUP

1 THE 'KEEN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone wants something to happen or is happy about something happening. We include here *reluctant*, which indicates that someone does not want something to happen.

They said they were happy for me to make my own arrangements.
He's keen for me to move into his house as soon as possible.

anxious	eager	keen
content	happy	reluctant
desperate	impatient	willing

2 THE 'READY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is ready for something to happen.

I feel now that at least as far as the house goes we're ready for the baby to arrive.

prepared	ready
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ADJ n for n

See meaning groups 1 and 5.

96 ADJ from n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *from* and a noun group.

	Adjective	from	noun group
His face was	familiar	from	a thousand statues.
Graham had always been	remote	from	his family.
He is	weary	from	his travels.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ABSENT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DIFFERENT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'INDISTINGUISHABLE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'APPARENT' GROUP
- 5 THE 'SAFE' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ACCESSIBLE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'DEAD' GROUP
- 8 THE 'DIRTY' GROUP
- 9 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ABSENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that one person, thing, or group is separate from another person, thing, or group. This separation may be

- physical e.g. *absent, missing, remote*
- legal e.g. *divorced 1, separated*
- emotional e.g. *alienated, detached, estranged*

Between March 1992 and January 1994, he was absent from work for 35 days.

Many young people are in danger of being alienated from the rest of society which offers them little or no future.

She is divorced from their father.

Further is often used in the phrase *nothing could be further from the truth.*

Sally appears the image of total health and fitness. Nothing could be further from the truth.

absent	disengaged	equidistant	independent
alienated	distanced	estranged	missing 3
aloof	distant	far	remote
detached	divorced 1,3	further	separated 1,2

2 THE 'DIFFERENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that one person or thing is different from another one. We include here *unchanged*, which indicates that something is not different.

Sally had always felt different from her siblings, two sisters and a brother.

different	divergent	separate 1
distinct	divorced 2	unchanged

3 THE 'INDISTINGUISHABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that two people or things can or cannot be separated physically, or can or cannot be recognized as different from each other.

People who work as clerks these days are usually **indistinguishable** from the rest of the working population, but last century in London and other large cities they stood out.

Attached but **removable** from the book, is a magnet.

She was **unrecognisable** from the girl she had been earlier.

detachable	indistinguishable	inseparable	separable
distinguishable	indivisible	removable	unrecognizable

4 THE 'APPARENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is recognized to be true, or that a person or thing can or cannot be identified. The noun group following *from* indicates the evidence for the truth or the identification.

Saturn's low density is **apparent** from its outline, which is even more squashed than that of Jupiter.

No living conductor is more instantly **identifiable** from the sound he makes.

apparent	evident	identifiable
detectable	familiar	

5 THE 'SAFE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a person or thing is or is not safe from harm. The possible cause of harm is indicated by the noun group following *from*.

In practice, melons need about 100 days **free** from frost to grow and ripen.

Ilkley Moor looks to be **safe** from the threat of oil exploration, much to the relief of the locals.

cocooned	immune	secure
free 6	safe 2	unprotected

6 THE 'ACCESSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a person or thing can or cannot be seen, heard, or reached. The noun group following *from* indicates the place from where someone might try to see, hear, or reach the person or thing.

The central sink unit is easily **accessible** from all sides of the room.

accessible	invisible
audible	visible

7 THE 'DEAD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a person is dead, disabled, ill, or uncomfortable. The noun group following *from* indicates the cause. In the case of most of these adjectives, the Subject indicates the person.

Within a couple of months, he was **dead** from pneumonia.

In the case of *numb*, *raw*, *sore*, and *stiff*, the Subject sometimes indicates a part of the body.

Anna got up and stretched. Her muscles were **sore** from the stillness.

The preposition *from* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The reports and tissue samples revealed the truth: the people who died hadn't gotten **sick** from eating contaminated meat.

dead	hoarse	sick	weary
disabled	ill	sore	
faint	numb	stiff	
giddy	raw 3	weak	

8 THE 'DIRTY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a person or thing has a particular appearance or is in a particular state. The noun group following *from* indicates the cause.

Your child's hands are likely to get **dirty** from the newspaper print as well as very sticky, so keep a bowl of soapy water handy for frequent washes.

Near the tide line, the rocks are **slippery** from crude oil apparently welling up from below the beach.

bloodshot	dishevelled	flushed	slippery
blotchy	dull	lustrous	wet
damp	dusty	pale	
dirty	filthy	shiny	

Adjectives which indicate colour are also used with this pattern. We list below the most frequent. The Subject may be a person, a part of the body, or a thing.

I was turning **blue** from lack of oxygen because I didn't want to gasp for air and look like I couldn't handle the pace.

black	green	rusty
blue	red	scarlet
brown	ruddy	white

Adjectives which indicate heat or coldness are also used with this pattern.

Harrell's face was **cold** from the wind.

cold	hot	warm
cool	icy	

9 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

Details are **available** from your school or college.

The interest income is subject to normal federal tax but is **exempt** from state income tax.

The wine itself is **free** from chemical additives or treatments.

He took over as chairman in 1989, **fresh** from the job of running the Hong Kong metro.

available	exempt	fresh 12	obtainable
deductible	free 6	handmade	predictable

Other related pattern

ADJ from n to n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *from* and a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*. There are two adjectives with this pattern. They indicate that something does not vary.

*Doctors are trained to expect that a drug will affect the great majority of individuals in a way that is **consistent from person to person**.*

*The sex difference in the importance of attractiveness remains **constant from one generation to the next**.*

consistent constant

97 ADJ in n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *in* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ in -ing.

	Adjective	in	noun group/-ing clause
Kevin is	engrossed	in	a game of blackjack.
He was	vigorous	in	calling for NATO air strikes.
You are	wanting	in	generosity.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'INVOLVED' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ADAMANT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'ASSIDUOUS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'LACKING' GROUP
- 5 THE 'INHERENT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'AWASH' GROUP
- 7 THE 'FLUENT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'CLOTHED' GROUP
- 9 THE 'PLASTERED' GROUP
- 10 THE 'SAFE' GROUP
- 11 THE 'APPARENT' GROUP
- 12 THE 'SLOW' GROUP
- 13 THE 'HELPFUL' GROUP
- 14 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 15 THE 'COMPARABLE' GROUP
- 16 THE 'CAREFUL' GROUP
- 17 THE 'SUCCESSFUL' GROUP
- 18 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP
- 19 THE 'LUCKY' GROUP
- 20 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'INVOLVED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is interested or involved in something. Some of these adjectives indicate that the involvement is judged to be positive (e.g. *absorbed*, *engrossed*, *interested*) and others indicate that the involvement is judged to be negative (e.g. *bogged down*, *enmeshed*). We include here *disinterested* and *uninterested*, which indicate that someone is not interested or involved in something.

*He was utterly **absorbed in his private game**.*

*The final scene finds Henrik and his pregnant wife **deep in conversation in a park**.*

*Universities need to be more **involved in student life**.*

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*They are still **embroiled in working out so many problems of their own**.*

Locked is sometimes a reciprocal adjective with the pattern ADJ in n with n.

*Mr. Brown is **locked in a messy legal battle with his former business ally**.*

absorbed	embroiled	immersed	mixed up
bogged down	engaged	implicated	tied up
concerned ◇9	engrossed	interested	uninterested
deep 10	enmeshed	involved	wrapped up
disinterested	entangled	locked	

2 THE 'ADAMANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone believes something strongly, or is determined to do something; or talks about something in a way that indicates strong belief or determination.

The noun group following the preposition *in* usually begins with a possessive determiner.

*She is **adamant in her refusal to make any statement**.*

*Both men are military officers **firm in their belief that the nation's interests and their own are one and the same**.*

*Last week the fans were **loud in their support for their manager, his players and his tactics**.*

*Even Greenpeace UK, so **vocal in its opposition to Sellafield**, said that their independent scientific advice was that low-level radiation posed no threat.*

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*He's very **firm in saying that he has to be allowed to return to Haiti**.*

*I think they've established their goals. I think they're **resolute in pursuing them**.*

adamant	frank	steadfast	vocal
firm	loud 2	unequivocal	vociferous
forthright	resolute	vehement	

3 THE 'ASSIDUOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone works hard at something or does something without stopping.

The noun group following the preposition *in* often begins with a possessive determiner.

*His ancestors were much more **ruthless in their exploitation of the workers than he was**.*

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Despite his accent, Podulski had been assiduous in learning his adopted language.

assiduous	rigorous	vigorous
relentless	ruthless	

4 THE 'LACKING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is missing.

In most cases, the noun group following the preposition *in* indicates the thing that is missing, and the Subject indicates the person or thing that needs something.

There's a need for people to teach literacy and numeracy to kids who are deficient in those skills.

Sometimes the noun group following the preposition *in* indicates the person or thing that needs something, and the Subject indicates the thing that is missing.

If any of these characteristics are lacking in your relationship, you know you are in trouble and so is your relationship.

deficient	lacking	wanting
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5 THE 'INHERENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something exists as part of another thing.

All the mistakes point up the limitations inherent in the technology.

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There are long-term benefits implicit in bringing children and books together on a regular basis.

implicit	inherent	present 2
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6 THE 'AWASH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something contains a lot of some quality, substance, or things, or only a little.

The industry is awash in money.

Keep your meals low in fat and sugar.

awash	low 9	rich 5
high 5	poor 7	

7 THE 'FLUENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has, or does not have, a particular skill.

She was fluent in Russian and spoke Hebrew and German well.

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The air force requires all its members to be proficient in handling weapons.

fluent	skilful	versed
proficient	skilled	
school	unskilled	

8 THE 'CLOTHED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is dressed in a particular way.

She was clothed in a red top, grey slacks and shoes.

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by a colour word. This pattern is ADJ in colour.

She was all dressed in white. It was super.

arrayed	clad 1	dressed 2	garbed
attired	clothed 1	dressed up 2	shod

This use is productive: other adjectives are sometimes used to indicate that someone looks good in particular clothing, especially the two listed below.

We saw the great man, resplendent in a white tracksuit, being guided towards a giant birthday cake.

resplendent	stunning
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9 THE 'PLASTERED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone is covered or partly covered by something. We include here *bathed* 2, *cocooned* 2, and *shrouded* 3, which indicate a metaphorical covering.

As I recovered my senses I realised I was bathed in a cold sweat.

The population was cocooned in a web of welfare and regulation that was financed by increasing debt.

You can't help but become aware of Aids because all the clinics are plastered in leaflets.

His disappearance was shrouded in mystery.

The adjective *knee deep* is used to describe either a person or the ground.

In winter, the countryside was either knee deep in mud and muck or frozen solid.

The director, sleek and handsome in a wetsuit, was standing knee-deep in a river, directing.

In the case of *banded*, *edged*, and *upholstered*, the preposition *in* is sometimes followed by a colour word. This pattern is ADJ in colour.

An irregular portion on the left of the map was edged in a mild green.

banded	clothed 2	finished 4	smothered
bathed 1,2	coated 3	knee-deep	upholstered
bedecked	cocooned 1,2	plastered	
clad 2	edged	shrouded 3,4	

10 THE 'SAFE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has a feeling about something. The noun group following the preposition *in* indicates the cause or scope of that feeling.

I was confident in my ability to play the game again after a 10-year lapse.

I feel very disappointed in him and very let down.

He was **happy** in his Apache life and more fulfilled than he'd ever been.

In the case of **comfortable**, **confident**, and **happy** the preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

If as a child you feel loved, you are most likely to feel **comfortable** in expressing your feelings.

comfortable	disappointed	happy	nervous
confident	frozen	miserable	unhappy

The adjectives listed below are used with the phrase **in the knowledge** and indicate that someone feels safe or comfortable because they know something.

Safe in the knowledge that your pets are enjoying their holidays, you can relax and enjoy yours.

The adjective **easy** is used with the verb **rest**.

The person who misses out can rest **easy** in the knowledge that he will be a part of our campaign for the rest of the year.

certain /	content	safe	sure
comfortable	easy	secure	
confident	happy	smug	

11 THE 'APPARENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something can be deduced from something. The noun group following the preposition **in** indicates the evidence for the deduction.

The influence of his mother was **apparent** in his moral outlook.

apparent	evident	obvious
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12 THE 'SLOW' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something quickly or slowly, or that something happens quickly or slowly.

The preposition **in** is followed by an '-ing' clause.

Success was not **long** in coming.

Once the Antarctic hole was recognised as a fact, the world's nations were remarkably **quick** in agreeing to phase out production of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

Mr Swift denied police had been extremely **slow** in responding to the initial complaints.

The adjective **long** is also used in the phrase **long in the making**.

Marie-Antoinette chose a very special fabric, very **long in the making**, and while she was waiting for it, a simple blue silk was used in its place.

long	slow
quick	tardy

13 THE 'HELPFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone is useful or useless in a particular field.

I understand celery seed extracts are **helpful** in the treatment of arthritis.

The preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There is also a puppy which has proved very **useful** in helping shy children to relate more easily.

beneficial	unparalleled	valuable
helpful	useful	
invaluable	useless	

14 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone is important in a particular area.

The type of oil being used also is **important** in the fight against heart disease.

The preposition **in** is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

All parents hope their child will enjoy reading for the pleasure of it. But this skill, along with accurate spelling, is **essential** in succeeding in most areas of life.

critical	essential	instrumental	relevant
crucial	important	pivotal	significant
decisive	influential	prominent	vital

15 THE 'COMPARABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that two or more things are similar or different.

These adjectives are **reciprocal adjectives**. That is, they are typically used with a plural noun group as Subject, or they are used in a pattern with **from**, **to**, or **with**, as shown below. We include here **unanimous**, which has a plural noun group as Subject.

Mars and Sirius may be **comparable** in brilliance, but Sirius scintillates with a multitude of colours, while Mars glows steadily with a hue somewhere between yellow and red.

The three titles are quite **different** in style and content, but all come highly recommended.

The two of them are very **similar** in physique, temperament and style of racing.

The students are **unanimous** in their desire to increase government spending on education and to employ more teachers and administrative staff.

comparable	identical	unanimous
compatible	the same	
different	similar	

If the Subject is not a plural noun group, **comparable** is typically used with a prepositional phrase beginning with **to** or **with**; **different** is used with a prepositional phrase beginning with **to** or **from**; **identical** and **similar** are used with a prepositional phrase beginning with **to**; **the same** is used with a prepositional phrase beginning with **as**. These patterns are ADJ in n as n, ADJ in n from n, and ADJ in n to n.

Saint Brides' church with its billowing arches is really quite **different** in mood from the calmer interior of St Phillip's.

At 68 metres, the new airship is **similar** in length to a jumbo jet.

16 THE 'CAREFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does something with or without care.

We are all for governments being **careful** in their spending.

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*This led to charges that the agency was **remiss** in protecting the public against unsafe drugs.*

careful	meticulous	scrupulous
cautious	negligent	
lax	remiss	

17 THE 'SUCCESSFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is successful or unsuccessful.

*Carey said she had originally been **disappointed** in her quest for a career in social work.*

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*Mr Gates has been hugely **successful** in creating a world-beating business.*

disappointed	experienced	successful
effective	ineffective	unsuccessful

18 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is judged to be right or wrong in doing something.

*As a breed, anglers are notoriously **negligent** in the maintenance of their tackle.*

*You were **wrong** in what you said about Harry Evans.*

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*Her husband has been **remiss** in failing to seek reconciliation according to African cultural traditions.*

*Dave is **right** in saying it would be silly to build two new stadiums.*

correct	lax	remiss	wise
justified	negligent	right	wrong

19 THE 'LUCKY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is judged to be lucky or unlucky in something that they do or in something that happens.

*A friend has reminded me of an old saying – something about people who are **unlucky** in love being lucky at cards.*

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*I've not been very **lucky** in buying good children's clothes.*

fortunate	lucky	unlucky
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20 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

*Even here in Britain there are new composers whose compositions are **rooted** in music from other classical traditions.*

*Many toxic substances, such as tobacco tar, are attracted to oil or fat but are not particularly **soluble** in water.*

In the case of *alone*, the preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. In the case of *unusual* the preposition *in* is always followed by an '-ing' clause.

*We are not **alone** in suffering these indignities.*

*This species is **unusual** in preferring moister spots.*

alone	rooted	steeped
insoluble	soluble	unusual

Productive use

The use of an adjective followed by *in* is productive. Adjectives which indicate how someone behaves in a particular situation also have this pattern. They include *active*, *flexible*, *generous*, *honest*, *innovative*, *lavish*, *scathing*, *serious*, and *sincere*.

*I met dozens of women who were **active** in the Islamic women's movement who saw the veil not as a symbol of oppression but rather as a source of personal liberation.*

The noun group often begins with a possessive determiner.

*Sadie Murdoch, a graduate of Chelsea College of Art, is **innovative** in her use of oil paints.*

*She was **scathing** in her comments on the hypocrites of English class, but tolerant of human weaknesses.*

*Mr Brooke is convinced that the political parties are **serious** in their desire for negotiations.*

Other related patterns

ADJ in colour

See meaning groups 8 and 9 above.

ADJ in n as n

See meaning group 15 above.

ADJ in n from n

See meaning group 15 above.

ADJ in n to n

See meaning group 15 above.

ADJ in n with n

See meaning group 1 above.

98 ADJ of n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *of* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause. These patterns are **ADJ of -ing** and **ADJ of wh**.

	Adjective	of	noun group / -ing / wh
He was	dismissive	of	the idea.
I'm not	scared	of	dying.
I am	aware	of	what I am doing.
None of these moves is	free	of	problems.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FOND' AND 'CRITICAL' GROUP
- 2 THE 'AFRAID' GROUP
- 3 THE 'TIRED' GROUP
- 4 THE 'DESIROUS' GROUP
- 5 THE 'ASSURED' GROUP
- 6 THE 'CERTAIN' AND 'UNCERTAIN' GROUP
- 7 THE 'AWARE' AND 'UNAWARE' GROUP
- 8 THE 'CONSIDERATE' AND 'CARELESS' GROUP
- 9 THE 'EMPTY' GROUP
- 10 THE 'FULL' GROUP
- 11 THE 'INDICATIVE' GROUP
- 12 THE 'DESTRUCTIVE' GROUP
- 13 THE 'DESERVING' GROUP
- 14 THE 'KIND' GROUP
- 15 THE 'CLEAR' GROUP
- 16 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'FOND' AND 'CRITICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has a particular attitude towards someone or something. Some of them, such as *critical* and *dismissive*, indicate that the attitude is shown in what the person says.

But Mr Green had become increasingly critical of the Government's plans.

She was awfully nice. I was very fond of her.

We are proud of our achievements.

We have grown less tolerant of inefficiency, injustice, frustrating bureaucracy and poor service.

In the case of *ashamed* 1, *fond* 3, *proud*, *resentful*, and *supportive*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I am not ashamed of making money from boxing.

In the case of *envious* and *jealous*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ of n -ing.

She was jealous of me being with Tony.

appreciative	disrespectful	jealous 2	scornful
ashamed 1,2	enamoured	possessive	supportive
contemptuous	envious	protective	tolerant 1
critical	fond 1,3	proud	uncritical
disdainful	glad	resentful	
dismissive	impatient	respectful	
disparaging	intolerant	scathing	

2 THE 'AFRAID' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is frightened or wary. One adjective, *unafraid*, indicates that someone is not frightened.

Everyone is afraid of him.

It left millions of Americans distrustful of their own government, ready to believe the worst.

She was terrified of heights.

With all these adjectives except *distrustful*, *mistrustful*, and *sceptical*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Unemployment is falling, but most people are frightened of losing their jobs.

Many people are wary of investing in share-based investments because the value can go down and they may lose money.

afraid	fearful	petrified	terrified
apprehensive	frightened	scared	unafraid
cautious	leery	sceptical	wary 1
chary	mistrustful	shy 2	
distrustful	nervous	suspicious	

3 THE 'TIRED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone feels bored, unhappy, or cross because a situation has continued for too long.

Do you get tired of all the questions?

The preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I'm sick of hearing about her book.

bored	sick 4	weary 2
fed up	tired 3	

4 THE 'DESIROUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone would like to have something.

I was envious of their anonymity.

In the case of *desirous*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Berlau watched a stream of newcomers arrive, all desirous of working closely with 'the master'.

desirous	envious	jealous 2
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5 THE 'ASSURED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something will definitely get or achieve something.

Juventus are now assured of a place in the quarter-finals of the European Cup.

The preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Most people don't worry about the cost. They just want to be sure of getting what they want.

assured certain 2 sure 2

6 THE 'CERTAIN' AND 'UNCERTAIN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone thinks something is true or will happen, or does not know what is true or will happen.

'We will improve, I'm certain of that,' he promised.

However, following talks with government officials, the oil workers' leader, Nikolai Trifonov, says he's hopeful of a settlement.

When there's a recession, you're bound to feel more out of control, anxious and uncertain of the future.

In the case of *certain*, *confident*, *doubtful*, *hopeful*, *optimistic*, and *sure*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

We are confident of forming the next government.

In the case of *certain*, *sure*, *uncertain*, and *unsure*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

I was unsure of what to do.

certain 1	doubtful	persuaded	unconvinced
confident	hopeful	sure 1	unsure 2
convinced	optimistic	uncertain 1	

7 THE 'AWARE' AND 'UNAWARE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone knows, or does not know, that something exists, is true, is happening, or is present.

I think he's fully aware of those dangers.

We stood very still and they seemed unaware of our presence.

The preposition *of* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

They could not have been totally ignorant of where the money was coming from.

In the case of *aware*, *conscious*, and *unaware*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I was very conscious of being the only woman in the department.

aware	ignorant	unconscious
cognizant	oblivious	
conscious	unaware	

8 THE 'CONSIDERATE' AND 'CARELESS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone considers someone or something, or ignores them.

The driver had fled, careless of the fact that medical attention might be essential to save the victim's life.

Please respect the environment and be considerate of others.

In the case of *mindful*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

On 28 August 1974 Congress, mindful of saving money, directed the Navy to terminate the project.

In the case of *careful* and *mindful*, the preposition is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

Be careful of what you say.

careful	forgetful	neglectful	watchful
careless 2	heedless	respectful	
considerate	mindful	solicitous	

9 THE 'EMPTY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something does not have, contain, or include something.

Although they can still articulate words properly, their sentences are devoid of meaning.

When the earthquake struck, most people were still in bed and the roads were empty of traffic.

All charges for service are exclusive of value added tax.

We're very short of money.

In the case of *clean*, *dry* and *free* 11, the adjective is used in the pattern *v n ADJ of n*.

The rain had swept the ground clean of tracks.

bare	devoid	free 6,7,11	sold out
barren	drained	net 2.1	void
bereft	dry	rid 5	
clean	empty	shorn	
clear 8	exclusive	short 6	

10 THE 'FULL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something has, contains, or includes something.

My boots were full of water.

I found him to be a stimulating, entertaining and highly intelligent person, possessed of a very lively and fertile mind.

brimful	full	possessed
chock-full	inclusive	

11 THE 'INDICATIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something shows what something is like, or reminds you of something.

Sudden swings in blood sugar are characteristic of this type of diabetes.

The room is reminiscent of a bank vault.

Its gloomy spaces are suggestive of a closed world bounded by a strict order.

But Rover's poor sales are symptomatic of a deeper malaise.

In the case of *indicative*, *symbolic*, *symptomatic*, and *typical*, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

Often physical appearance is indicative of how a person feels about himself.

characteristic	illustrative	representative 4	uncharacteristic
descriptive	indicative	suggestive	unrepresentative
emblematic	redolent	symbolic	untypical
evocative	reflective	symptomatic	
expressive	reminiscent	typical	

12 THE 'DESTRUCTIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has a harmful effect on something.

Secrets are **destructive** of relationships.

destructive	disruptive	subversive
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13 THE 'DESERVING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something deserves something, or does not deserve it.

He is **deserving** of sympathy, though he may regret his ill-judged comment.

In the case of **unworthy** and **worthy**, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

This inability to love often is based on low self-esteem and the feeling of being **unworthy** of being loved.

deserving	unworthy 1	worthy
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14 THE 'KIND' GROUP

These adjectives indicate what quality someone shows by doing something. This use is productive: any adjective which indicates a quality can be used in this pattern. The adjectives listed below are the ones which are most frequently used in this way.

Thank you. It's very **kind** of you.

That was **stupid** of me.

brave	generous	perceptive	sweet
careless	good	rude	thoughtful
clever	kind	silly	wrong
foolish	nice 2	stupid	

15 THE 'CLEAR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate where something is in relation to something else, physically or metaphorically.

They had to inform helicopter pilots when the horses were **clear** of the track and it was safe to land.

The worst-hit areas are **north** of the capital.

adrift	east	south	west
aft 1	north	south-east	wide
clear 16	north-east	south-west	
downwind	north-west	upwind	

16 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

On looking into the tent, Arese discovered its occupants all **dead** of the smallpox.

No previous culture has even been subjected to such terrifying spectacles, so **productive** of dismay and fear.

The issue is expected to be **top** of the agenda when the French and American presidents meet on Thursday in Florida.

The same is **true** of virtually all ethnic groups.

In the case of **capable**, **guilty**, **incapable**, and **innocent**, the preposition *of* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I don't think anybody thought she was **capable** of winning the gold medal in tennis.

He was found **guilty** of breaking into a shop in 1985.

Late comes in apposition after names, not after a link verb.

Steve Wright, **late** of Radio 1 and Talk Radio, has joined Radio 2.

beloved	incapable	predictive	true 4
capable	independent	productive	unbecoming
dead	innocent	tolerant	unworthy 2
guilty	late 6	top 10	

Productive uses

- 1 Past participles of verbs such as *make* and *build* are used like adjectives and followed by *of*: The box was **made** of glass, the first ship **built** of steel.
- 2 In literary writing, *of* is used after adjectives in descriptions. For example, instead of saying that someone has brown skin or a compact frame, a writer might say they are **brown** of skin or **compact** of frame.

Other related pattern

v n ADJ of n

See meaning group 9 above.

99 ADJ on n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *on* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause or a *wh*-clause. These patterns are **ADJ on -ing** and **ADJ on wh**.

Some adjectives are sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*. *Upon* is a more formal or literary word.

	Adjective	on/upon	noun group/ ing/wh clause
The sale was	conditional	upon	government approval.
Mobility isn't	dependent	on	being able to drive.
Tea-tree oil is	gentle	on	the skin.
They were both	keen	on	the idea of education.
He was	undecided	on	whether to run for another term.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'KEEN' GROUP
- 2 THE 'FAIR' AND 'ROUGH' GROUP
- 3 THE 'EMPHATIC' GROUP
- 4 THE 'VAGUE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'WEAK' AND 'STRONG' GROUP
- 6 THE 'OPTIMISTIC' GROUP
- 7 THE 'SHORT' AND 'HEAVY' GROUP
- 8 THE 'AGREED' GROUP
- 9 THE 'CONDITIONAL' GROUP
- 10 THE 'DEPENDENT' GROUP
- 11 THE 'HIGH' GROUP
- 12 THE 'PAYABLE' GROUP
- 13 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'KEEN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone likes someone or something very much. We include here *hooked* 3, which indicates that someone is addicted to a drug, and *fixated*, which indicates that someone is obsessed with something. We also include the adjectives *hell-bent* and *intent*, which indicate that someone is determined to do something.

*I'm not that **big** on religion.*

*We would not be **fixated** on one person to the exclusion of the world.*

*He asked about you. I think he's still **sweet** on you.*

In the case of *fixated*, *hooked* 2, *keen* 3, and *stuck*, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. In the case of *hell-bent* and *intent*, the preposition is usually followed by an '-ing' clause.

*He's always very **intent** on doing what he wants.*

In the case of *keen*, the preposition *on* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ on n -ing.

*I don't think my dad's too **keen** on me going away.*

The adjective *intent* is sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*.

*Her husband was **intent upon** maximizing production in the fields.*

big	hooked 2,3	mad
fixated	intent	stuck
hell-bent	keen 2,3,9	sweet

2 THE 'FAIR' AND 'ROUGH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone treats someone in a particular way, or that a situation affects someone in a particular way.

Unlike most other vivid colours, blues and greens are **easy** on the eye and soothing. I just couldn't do it with three kids around me. Wouldn't be **fair** on them. 'Don't be too **rough** on the boy,' I said.

cruel	gentle	kind	soft 5
easy	hard 9,10	rough	tough
fair	harsh	severe	unfair

3 THE 'EMPHATIC' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has strong or unchanging views about something, or expresses their views strongly.

*Ferguson has been more **emphatic** on the subject.*

*The government was **inflexible** on the need for industrial reform.*

adamant	emphatic	insistent	specific
clear	firm	outspoken	uncompromising
eloquent	inflexible	passionate	

4 THE 'VAGUE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone does not have strong or unchanging views about something, or does not say clearly what they think or know. We include here *reticent* and *silent*, which indicate that someone does not talk about something.

*The chairman of the BBC has assured us, and has said in vigorous terms, that the BBC is not **neutral** on this point.*

*Feminists have remained largely **silent** on the question of easier divorce, presumably because women have diametrically opposed personal interests.*

*I wondered why I hadn't met him before but Jonathan was a bit **vague** on the subject.*

The preposition *on* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

*The White House was **silent** on when a military conflict could break out.*

ambiguous	coy	reticent	undecided
cagey	flexible	silent	vague
cautious	neutral	unclear	

5 THE 'WEAK' AND 'STRONG' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a judgement about the extent of someone's knowledge or the way they convey it.

*Whenever I've heard him talk I've always found him **clued-up** on whatever he was talking about.*

*Malcolm may have been **weak** on theory, but with his dress, his behavior, and even his art, he laid claim to being the big revolutionary on campus.*

clued-up	good	wrong
correct	strong 10	
excellent	weak 12	

6 THE 'OPTIMISTIC' GROUP

These adjectives indicate someone's attitude to something.

Tony Randall, 75, says people shouldn't get too **hung up** on age differences between men and women.

Warburg remains **optimistic** on global economic growth in 1996 despite some temporary weakness.

bullish 2	optimistic	upbeat
hung up	sensitive	

7 THE 'SHORT' AND 'HEAVY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that there is a lot or a little of something in a particular thing, person, or situation.

Dr V was obviously not **big** on tact.

The picture showed a tubby, beige, balding man, **short** on muscles and **heavy** on everything else.

The disgraceful article which appeared on page one, was very **heavy** on rumour and very **light** on fact.

big	light 2.2	low 17
heavy	long	short 1.6

8 THE 'AGREED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that two or more people or groups agree or disagree about something. These adjectives are reciprocal adjectives.

The three major opposition parties were said to be **agreed** on a candidate, but have yet to meet to make a final announcement.

The two countries remained far **apart** on details.

The preposition *on* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Both the two main election contenders are **agreed** on wanting greater democracy and a move towards a western-style market economy.

The preposition *on* is sometimes followed by a *wh*-clause.

If the three main political parties agree on nothing else, they are **unanimous** on what science is for.

agreed	unanimous
apart 1.8	unified

9 THE 'CONDITIONAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that one thing only happens if another thing does.

The President made his departure **conditional** on a guarantee of safety for himself and members of his family.

The type of weave produced is **dependent** on the sequence of interlacing.

The adjective is sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*.

The settlement is **conditional** upon acceptance by a majority in a postal ballot.

The preposition *on* or *upon* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

He was asked whether the acceptance of the resolutions was **contingent** on getting a cease-fire.

The preposition *on* or *upon* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ on n-ing.

The project is **conditional** on natural gas being supplied to the area.

attendant 2	contingent
conditional	dependent 2

10 THE 'DEPENDENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something relies on someone or something else to live or to be successful.

The toy industry is heavily **reliant** on the whims of the pre-teen generation.

The adjective is sometimes followed by *upon* instead of *on*.

As a charity, we are **dependent** upon the generosity of supporters like you.

dependent 1	reliant
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These adjectives also have the patterns ADJ on/upon n for n and ADJ on/upon n to-inf.

The offspring is totally **dependent** on the parent for survival.

Her career ruled her life and she became **dependent** on her record company to take care of her.

11 THE 'HIGH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is affected by a drug, so that their behaviour and perceptions are altered.

He confessed to the killings, even though he said he was too **high** on drugs and alcohol to remember them.

high 17	stoned	strung out 2
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12 THE 'PAYABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a sum of money should be paid.

Full deposits are **payable** on all reservations.

There is an additional deposit for the wicker basket, which is **refundable** on return.

Since 6 April 1990 a married woman has been **taxable** on any state retirement pension she receives.

payable	refundable
redeemable	taxable

13 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

These are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

Another function of trade unions is collective bargaining, negotiating with employers on behalf of the union's members; any negotiated agreements are then legally **binding** on both employers and workers.

He is currently **engaged** on a research/writing project in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Imagine your name engraved on the beautiful gold and silver Amateur Photographer of the Year trophy.

This cuisine is certainly heavy on eggs.

A small army of reporters and photographers were hot on their trail.

based 7	engaged	heavy 13
binding 1	engraved	hot
economical	founded	plastered

Several adjectives occur with *on your feet* and describe the way someone moves.

And he was light on his feet too, he was like a dancer.

fast	nimble	unsteady
light	quick	

Other related patterns

ADJ on/upon n for n

See meaning group 10 above..

ADJ on/upon n to-inf

See meaning group 10 above.

100 ADJ over n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *over* and a noun group. With some adjectives the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ *over* -ing.

	Adjective	over	noun group
Mr Moon was	furious	over	his arrest.
Pamela is	potty	over	her daughter.
Labour is	vulnerable	over	tax.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DESPONDENT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'WORRIED' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ENTHUSIASTIC' GROUP
- 5 THE 'JEALOUS' GROUP
- 6 THE 'GO MAD' GROUP
- 7 THE 'DOMINANT' GROUP
- 8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is angry about a situation.

Trotter was plainly furious over what he felt was Wilson's betrayal.

In the case of *angry*, the preposition *over* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

The pilots are angry over working without a contract for two years.

angry	bitter	furious	livid
annoyed	disgruntled	irate	mad 3

2 THE 'DESPONDENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is unhappy about a situation.

Barlowe was said to be despondent over the rise of right-wing extremism.

The preposition *over* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Police say they believe the gunman was angry at the government and distraught over being denied a student loan.

despondent	heartbroken
distraught	unhappy

3 THE 'WORRIED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is worried about a situation.

Canada is seriously worried over the level of spending on welfare and is thinking of drastic steps to reduce it.

anxious	tense
jittery	worried

4 THE 'ENTHUSIASTIC' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is happy or content about a situation.

We like an artist who is enthusiastic over talent in others.

ecstatic	euphoric	optimistic
enthusiastic	jubilant	philosophical

5 THE 'JEALOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a range of other reactions to a situation. The noun group following *over* indicates the cause of the reaction.

Attempts to make him jealous over Spike's frequent visits came to nothing.

Joseph is unrepentant over his sensational kiss-and-tell revelations about Jemima.

ashamed	flexible	sceptical	unrepentant
careful	jealous	sensitive	
cautious	nostalgic	uncertain	

6 THE 'GO MAD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone likes someone or something to an extreme or unreasonable extent. These adjectives usually occur with the verb *go*.

Adjectives

I hate a lot of these sports, you know, when people just go mad over them and they don't seem to have any sort of concern for the countryside.
Some women find blonde men attractive while others go wild over men with ebony-black hair.

crazy 3	mad 4	wild 11
goosey 2	potty	

7 THE 'DOMINANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a person or group has power over another person, group, or thing. We include here *victorious*, which indicates that someone wins a battle or argument, and *powerless*, which indicates that someone has no power.

Science de-mystified nature and portrayed human beings as separate from and dominant over nature.

Max was recently victorious over ex-Soviet chess master Yuri Shulman.

dominant	sovereign	victorious
powerless	supreme	

8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern. *Deadlocked* is a reciprocal adjective.

The European Community and the United States are deadlocked over the farm subsidies problem.

In all cultures some jobs are privileged over others.

deadlocked	privileged	vulnerable
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101 ADJ to n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ to -ing.

	Adjective	to	noun/group / -ing clause
The terms are	favourable	to	women.
Make your cheque	payable	to	the charity of your choice.
We are	unused	to	having to worry about water.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'BENEFICIAL' GROUP
- 2 THE 'DETRIMENTAL' GROUP
- 3 THE 'PARTIAL' GROUP
- 4 THE 'GENEROUS' AND 'HORRIBLE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'FASCINATING' AND 'INFURIATING' GROUP

- 6 THE 'SIMILAR' GROUP
- 7 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'SENSITIVE' GROUP
- 9 THE 'ACCUSTOMED' GROUP
- 10 THE 'LIABLE' GROUP
- 11 THE 'MARRIED' GROUP
- 12 THE 'INFERIOR' GROUP
- 13 THE 'RESPONSIBLE' GROUP
- 14 THE 'RESTRICTED' GROUP
- 15 THE 'RECOGNIZABLE' GROUP
- 16 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP
- 17 THE 'ACCESSIBLE' GROUP
- 18 THE 'PARALLEL' GROUP
- 19 THE 'TANTAMOUNT' GROUP
- 20 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'BENEFICIAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone is beneficial to something or someone, or is well adapted to certain conditions.

Such plants not only attract many insects which are beneficial to the birds, but also provide seclusion and valuable nesting sites.

Being born means a drastic change of environment – in particular, the baby's lungs must be equal to the task of supplying it with oxygen.

I am more suited to office work, but unfortunately I cannot type or do shorthand or read English very well.

The preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

In the cities, living conditions are not conductive to wanting to have large numbers of children.

adapted	appropriate	equal 5	helpful
adequate	beneficial	favourable 3	invaluable
advantageous	conductive	harmless	suited 1

2 THE 'DETRIMENTAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone causes harm to something or someone, or is not adapted to certain conditions.

They know smoking is detrimental to health.

The pubs are done with corrugated iron and bare floor boards, and I think the objection is that they really are inappropriate to the place.

He has the right to ban a film, a demonstration or a procession if he feels it is likely to be prejudicial to public order.

costly	destructive	inadequate	unbecoming
damaging	detrimental	inappropriate	unequal
dangerous	disadvantageous	injurious	unsuited
defamatory	fatal	lethal	
degrading	harmful	misleading	
demeaning	hazardous	prejudicial	

3 THE 'PARTIAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone likes or dislikes someone or something, or that they want someone or something. The noun group following the preposition to indicates the person or thing that is liked or disliked.

Palo Alto officials have been cool to the idea of sharing the cost of the road and Stanford has dropped that request.

I am partial to a mixture of Madeira or port and orange.

As General Haig was wedded to his profession, he expected his men to be similarly attached.

In the case of those adjectives which indicate how someone feels about a situation, the preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Shakespeare was not averse to borrowing from ancient and, even, contemporary authors.

addicted	cool 8	married 3	reconciled
allergic 3	devoted 1,2	open 9	resistant 1
attached 1	disposed	opposed 1	sympathetic 2
attracted	favourable 1	partial	wedded 1
(not) averse	inimical	receptive 1	well disposed

4 THE 'GENEROUS' AND 'HORRIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate how someone treats another person, or how someone feels about someone or something. The adjective may indicate general good or bad behaviour, such as horrible or marvellous, or it may indicate specific kinds of behaviour or feelings, such as beholden, deferential, or disloyal.

I think Montville State School is a wonderful school. Everyone is friendly to each other.

I've been very generous to my son.

He was completely horrible to me in front of everybody.

Sometimes I wish I could just be rude to callers and hang up on them whenever I feel like it.

Do you worry about your partner being unfaithful to you?

abusive	disrespectful	hostile	nice 4
antagonistic	fair	indebted	obligated
attentive	faithful 1,2	indifferent	polite
beholden	friendly	insulting	respectful
compassionate	generous	kind 1	rude
courteous	good	loyal	sympathetic 1
deferential	grateful	marvellous	unfaithful
discourteous	horrible	mean 3	unkind
disloyal	horrid	nasty	unsympathetic 3

In the case of grateful, indebted, and obligated, the adjective is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with to and a second prepositional phrase beginning with for. The preposition for is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ to n for n/-ing.

He's a very capable politician and I'll always be indebted to him for giving me my first break.

5 THE 'FASCINATING' AND 'INFURIATING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone makes someone react in some way, for example with pleasure, hatred, anger, or interest. The noun group following the preposition indicates the person who reacts. This use is productive: a range of adjectives

are used in this way. We list below the most frequent.

Morrison is one of those Gothic characters who make boxing so fascinating to outsiders.

There is nothing more infuriating to an author than someone who gets the name of his beloved characters or works of art slightly wrong.

Ironically the faded grandeur of Brodsworth is far more pleasing to a modern eye than the fierce colours of the original.

I have no idea where Delilah Blue and Blackeyed Susan came from, but they are more real to me now than anyone I know.

abhorrent	distasteful	intolerable	painful
acceptable	distressing	irresistible	pleasing
agreeable	embarrassing	irritating	precious
appealing	fascinating	logical	real 2
confusing	hateful	meaningful	repugnant
dear	infuriating	meaningless	
disconcerting	interesting	offensive	

6 THE 'SIMILAR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that two people or things are the same, or different, or that they are being compared in some way. We include here disproportionate, proportionate, and proportional, which indicate that something is larger or smaller than expected.

Some people consider the use of different with this pattern to be incorrect.

The yogis say that fifteen minutes in the shoulder stand is comparable to two hours' sleep.

'We wanted to do something different to everyone else,' Mr. Brown said.

The punishments seem grossly disproportionate to the offense.

The Gagauz are Christians and speak a language similar to Turkish.

The preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

He once said that selling art was akin to selling root beer.

He explained to me why using an insect virus to kill insects is preferable to relying on chemicals.

akin	contrary	identical	proportionate
allied 2,3	different	inferior 1	related
analogous	disproportionate	opposed 2	similar
antithetical	dissimilar	parallel 4	suited 2
commensurate	equal 1	preferable	unrelated
comparable	equivalent	proportional	

7 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is an important, relevant, or necessary part of something, or that it is a less important or central part.

Until now, selling petrol has been seen as ancillary to the companies' main supermarket business.

Obviously, this matter is financially important to the future of the racing industry.

Executives have to take crucial and often difficult decisions. These are intrinsic to the job and are challenges to be met sensibly.

The Asia-Pacific region might once have been regarded as peripheral to the global economy, but it's now the most dynamic economic region in the world.

Adjectives

additional	crucial	instrumental	pertinent
ancillary	essential	integral	pivotal
applicable	fundamental	intrinsic	relevant
basic	germane	irrelevant	subordinate 3
bound 1,4	important	key	subservient 2
central	inapplicable	marginal	tangential
coincidental	incidental	necessary	unconnected
complementary	indispensable	paramount	
critical	inherent	peripheral	

8 THE 'SENSITIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is aware or unaware of something, or sensitive or insensitive to it. The sensitivity may be physical or emotional.

The Native American tradition was much more alive to the need to live in harmony with animals because many Native American tribes were hunter-gatherers who depended on wild animals for their survival.

If you are allergic to milk products then yogurt will not be good for you.

Growers are increasingly planting varieties of crops which have been specially bred to be resistant to pests and diseases.

A poet is especially sensitive to beauty, and more aware than most of what is going on around him.

Although divorce almost invariably leaves both parties worse off financially, women who are not working are particularly vulnerable to potential hardship.

In the case of vulnerable 3, the preposition to is often followed by an '-ing' clause.

Accept that your feelings are likely to be raw and your equilibrium badly affected for the present, and therefore that you're particularly vulnerable to making bad decisions.

alert	hypersensitive	oblivious	responsive
alive 5	immune	open 11	sensitive
allergic 1	impervious	oriented	susceptible
attuned	insensitive	predisposed	tuned in
blind	inured	receptive 2	unresponsive 1
deaf	invulnerable	resistant 2	vulnerable 2,3,4,5

9 THE 'ACCUSTOMED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is accustomed or unaccustomed to a situation.

The animals here are still so unaccustomed to humans that they have not learned to fear them.

The preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

We're used to seeing each other all day, every day, and there is a sense of isolation now that we're mainly apart.

The preposition to is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is ADJ to n-ing.

My mail was routinely opened, and I became accustomed to my letters arriving in clumsily re-glued envelopes.

acclimatized	habituated	unused
accustomed	unaccustomed	used 1,3

10 THE 'LIABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something often does or suffers something or may do or suffer something, usually something bad.

This cream is excellent for persons with oily complexions inclined to blemishes, spots, and pimples.

If you have an older house, which is liable to problems caused by wear and tear, this insurance policy may be for you.

In the case of doomed, given, open, and prone, the preposition to is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Type B personalities are gentle, introverted and prone to being used as doormats.

doomed	liable	subject 7
given 6	open 10	
inclined	prone	

11 THE 'MARRIED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that one person or group is related in a contractual way to another person or group. The adjectives betrothed, engaged, and married are reciprocal adjectives.

At the end of the war he was articled to his father at the well-known Lincoln's Inn firm of Speechly, Mumford and Soames.

He was happily married to a girl he had known since his schooldays.

affiliated	betrothed	federated
articled	engaged	married 1

12 THE 'INFERIOR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is in a higher or lower position than someone else.

Many men feel inferior to their colleagues, or feel failures, or cannot make a lot of money.

Batman Forever is definitely superior to the earlier Batman movies.

inferior 2	senior	subservient 1
junior	subordinate 2	superior

13 THE 'RESPONSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that one person or group has a responsibility or commitment of some kind towards another person or group.

Local councils are ultimately answerable to the electorate.

How many people are directly responsible to you?

accountable	dedicated 1	true 6
answerable	responsible	
committed	subject 8	

14 THE 'RESTRICTED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something occurs or is found in a specific place, or among specific people, or that something is restricted to a specific situation. We include here

endemic, which indicates that something occurs frequently in a place. We also include **common**, which indicates that something occurs with respect to two or more people, groups, things, or places.

The concept of love is very complex, and one would think that it is **common** to all cultures, but some languages have no word for it at all.

Grape vines are widespread and **indigenous** to the Americas, Europe and Asia.

Exotic flowers aren't always **restricted** to the greenhouse or conservatory.

Order a mixed drink flavored with kalamansi (a marble-size green citron **unique** to the Philippines) instead of the usual lemon or lime.

common 2	exclusive	particular	unique
confined	indigenous	peculiar	
distinctive	local	restricted 2	
endemic	native 2,5	specific	

15 THE 'RECOGNIZABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something can be seen, heard, recognized, or understood, or that they cannot be seen, heard, recognized, or understood.

The Animal Warning Device is a horn that sends out a high-frequency tone **inaudible** to the human ear but clear to any animals thinking of crossing the road ahead.

The crowd included faces **recognisable** to anyone who's been to the cinema in the past five years.

Although it has been out of use now for 27 years, the viaduct stands to this day and is clearly **visible** to rail passengers travelling between Sheffield and Doncaster.

audible	incomprehensible	recognizable	unrecognizable
familiar	intelligible	traceable	visible
inaudible	invisible	unfamiliar	

16 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is obvious.

Although panic is not **obvious** to the casual observer, it lies just below the surface.

The answer was far from **self-evident** to him.

apparent	evident	plain
clear	obvious	self-evident

17 THE 'ACCESSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that people are able or permitted to go somewhere, either physically or metaphorically, or that they are not able or permitted to go somewhere. The prepositional phrase indicates the person or group concerned.

The rationale for legal reform has been the need to make the justice system more **accessible** to ordinary wage earners.

Much of the country was still **off-limits** to outsiders.

accessible	inaccessible	open 25
available	off limits	

18 THE 'PARALLEL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that one person or thing has a particular physical position in relation to another person or thing.

Using a very sharp knife and holding it almost **parallel** to the work surface, slice the salmon paper-thin.

adjacent	contiguous	parallel 5
close 2,1	opposite	perpendicular

19 THE 'TANTAMOUNT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is almost the case. We include here *near* to and *next* to, which are **phrasal prepositions**, but whose meaning is very close to the words in this group.

I'm beginning to worry that while they're **close** to an agreement, they've left too little time for implementing it.

The preposition *to* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

They complained that patenting a human gene is **tantamount** to patenting human life and is immoral.

close 2,9,2,10	next 10
near 2	tantamount

20 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

The clock contains a quartz movement **accurate** to 60 seconds a year.

She loathed herself for all these suspicions, so **alien** to her nature, but they had grasped her with their talons and she could not escape them.

Breeding racehorses is largely a matter of common sense **allied** to experience, together with a deep interest in the subject.

I never felt **close** to my father.

This chapter is **devoted** to the subject of chairmanship.

At that time, **new** to the job, he was keen to demonstrate his sureness of mind.

She sat at her own large desk in an office adjoining his study, and was **privy** to all but the most confidential conversations.

accurate	attributable	faithful 4	opaque
adaptable	close 2,2	foreign	payable
alien	connected	free	privy
allied 4	dedicated 2	internal	reducible
amenable	devoted 3	natural	welcome
attached 2,3	due 5	new 7	

Other related pattern

ADJ to n for n/-ing

See meaning group 4 above.

102 ADJ towards/toward n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *towards* or *toward* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **ADJ towards/toward -ing**.

	Adjective	toward/towards	noun group/-ing clause
They should be more	considerate	towards	the prisoners.
The campaign was	oriented	towards	selling the product.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'SYMPATHETIC' GROUP
- 2 THE 'AGGRESSIVE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'AMBIVALENT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ORIENTED' GROUP

1 THE 'SYMPATHETIC' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has positive emotions towards someone or something, or that they behave in a way that is kind, generous or sensible. The verbs used with the adjective are *be* and, less frequently, *feel*. A wide range of adjectives are used with this pattern; the adjectives listed here are the ones which are most frequently used in this way.

I've always felt very affectionate towards Karen because she had a hard start in life.

He was more lenient towards women's weaknesses than he was towards those of men.

Men like to feel protective towards a woman.

Whilst people are usually sympathetic towards a handicapped child, sympathy is absent in most people's treatment of handicapped adults.

affectionate	friendly	indulgent	responsible
charitable	generous	lenient	sensitive
conciliatory	grateful	loyal	sympathetic
considerate	helpful	positive	tolerant
favourable	hospitable	protective	warm

2 THE 'AGGRESSIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has negative feelings towards someone or something, or that they behave in a way that is unkind or unfair. The verb used with the adjective is often *feel* as well as *be*. A wide range of adjectives are used with this pattern; the adjectives listed here are the ones which are most frequently used in this way.

He was cheeky to his teachers and aggressive towards the other boys.

Mr Bond admitted feeling bitter towards some former colleagues.

She never wondered why I should feel hostile toward my mother or father.

He is not physically violent towards her or her family but gets angry when drunk.

abusive	bitter	jealous	unfriendly
aggressive	cold	merciless	unjust
angry	condescending	negative	unsympathetic
antagonistic	hostile	pugnacious	vindictive
arrogant	insensitive	resentful	violent

3 THE 'AMBIVALENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has feelings towards someone or something that are both positive and negative, or neither strongly positive or negative, or that they behave in a way that suggests mixed feelings.

There was nobody that I was really attached to and there was nobody that I really disliked. I was pretty ambivalent towards school really.

Are we for it, against it or neutral towards it?

ambivalent	cool	lukewarm
apathetic	indifferent	neutral

4 THE 'ORIENTED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is mainly concerned with a particular aspect of something.

The five-speed gearbox is biased towards performance rather than economy.

The preposition *towards* or *toward* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Not all sociological research is oriented toward testing scientific ideas.

biased	slanted
oriented	weighted

103 ADJ with n

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *with* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is **ADJ with -ing**.

	Adjective	with	noun group/-ing clause
She just got	disgusted	with	him.
The police were fully	occupied	with	helping firemen.
They're really quite	pally	with	the doctor.
Bray turned	red	with	rage.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'PATIENT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'LAVISH' GROUP
- 4 THE 'BREATHLESS' GROUP
- 5 THE 'INVOLVED' GROUP
- 6 THE 'FAMILIAR' GROUP
- 7 THE 'EXCELLENT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'CURSED' GROUP
- 9 THE 'AWASH' GROUP
- 10 THE 'BRIGHT' GROUP
- 11 THE 'FLECKED' GROUP

Adjectives

- 12 THE 'COATED' GROUP
 13 THE 'INLAID' GROUP
 14 THE 'DECORATED' GROUP
 15 THE 'FRAGRANT' GROUP
 16 THE 'COMPARABLE' GROUP
 17 THE 'OKAY' GROUP
 18 THE 'LUCKY' GROUP
 19 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone feels something, such as anger, love, pleasure, or displeasure. The noun group following *with* indicates what the emotion relates to.

*I thought I was **angry** with them, but I realise I was angry at myself.*

*The most important things in life are to feel **comfortable** with oneself and to be content in one's surroundings.*

*Sheers said she was **happy** with her achievements against tough opposition.*

*I was particularly **taken** with the work of a writer called Dee Caruso.*

The preposition *with* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*These warnings do little to sway couples who are **consumed** with finding a child at any cost.*

*The drug barons are not **content** with simply dominating the world cocaine market. They've already begun to diversify their product line.*

angry	delighted	fascinated	satisfied
annoyed	disappointed	fed up	smitten
besotted	discontented	furious	sympathetic
bored	disenchanted	happy	taken 2
chuffed	disgusted	impressed	thrilled
comfortable	disillusioned	infatuated	uncomfortable
consumed	displeased	livid	uneasy
content	dissatisfied	mad	unhappy
contented	enamoured	obsessed	unimpressed
cross	exasperated	pleased	unsatisfied

2 THE 'PATIENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone behaves in a particular way with respect to someone or something. We include here *close*, *friendly*, and *intimate*, which are **reciprocal adjectives** indicating that two people have a close relationship.

*He would never be **adventurous** with his choice of friends, he wouldn't branch out and want to meet more interesting people.*

*I would love it if you were more **affectionate** with me, even if we're with other people.*

*Stewart's humble beginnings encouraged him to be **careful** with his money.*

*She had to be **firm** with him. 'I don't want to see you again' she said.*

*I have been entirely **frank** with you and I trust you to be equally **candid** with me.*

*They may tell you that you're wrong about yourself; that you're not as **generous** with others as you imagine.*

*Barbara was able to continue feeling **intimate** with her daughter even though their relationship had changed.*

*The authorities have promised to be **lenient** with dealers who turn themselves in.*

*It is extremely important that parents are **open** with their child and encourage discussion.*

*He was tremendously **patient** with the children, yet firm enough that they responded to his love.*

adventurous	firm	intimate	rough
affectionate	frank	involved 5	ruthless
aggressive	friendly	lenient	short 12
awkward	generous	liberal	stern
candid	gentle	mean	straight
careful	heavy-handed	open 7	strict
careless	honest	pally	tough
close 2.2	impatient	patient	

3 THE 'LAVISH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is generous or not generous. The noun group following *with* indicates the thing that the person is willing or unwilling to give or spend.

*The Griffins had arrived at Cap Martin by car and were very **generous** with offers of lifts.*

*He welcomes visitors and he's **lavish** with advice.*

*I've always been **mean** with money.*

economical	generous	mean
extravagant	lavish	profligate

4 THE 'BREATHLESS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone looks or feels a particular way because of a strong emotion. The noun group following the preposition *with* indicates the emotion. We include here *blue*, where someone's appearance is caused by cold. We also include *ill*, *sick*, *stricken* and *unwell*, where a condition may be caused by a disease.

This use is productive: any adjective which indicates a state which is the result of something can be used in this way.

*His face and hands were **blue** with cold and his thin body shivered uncontrollably.*

*Guapo was speaking in a voice **breathless** with excitement.*

*She felt almost giddy, **drunk** with strange emotions.*

*I couldn't stand seeing Nigel chatting to slim, attractive women; I was **eaten up** with jealousy.*

*Suddenly my eye caught a ray of white light coming down from a cloud, and I was **frozen** with fear.*

*Mr Major was understood to be **incandescent** with rage that he was not informed personally about the decision.*

*I feel I'm going **mad** with worry.*

*She was **rigid** with indignation, hands clenched.*

*Then I was **unwell** with post-natal depression, which no one ever discusses.*

***Wide-eyed** with horror, Joanna took a half-step forward.*

agog	convulsed	ecstatic	helpless
blind	crazy	faint	hoarse
blue	delirious	flushed	ill
bouncing	distraught	frantic	incandescent
breathless	dizzy	frozen	livid
bursting 2	drunk 3	green	mad
choked 1	eaten up	grey	numb

open-mouthed	red	stricken	weak
pink	rigid	taut	white
prostrate	sick	tense	wide 3
puffed up	speechless	tight	wide-eyed
purple	stiff	unwell	wild 5

5 THE 'INVOLVED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is busy with an activity, or has a close connection with an activity.

The former first lady is **busy** with charity work and other projects.

Stone has been **involved** with athletics since she was eight.

Liz was quite happy to work on the garden while Chris was **tied up** with his new business.

In the case of *busy*, *involved*, *occupied*, *preoccupied*, and *tied up*, the preposition *with* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

Most people are **preoccupied** with scraping together an existence.

busy	entangled	occupied
embroided	entwined	preoccupied
enmeshed	involved	tied up

6 THE 'FAMILIAR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone knows someone or something, or does not know them.

The local newspaper only advertised jobs in Welsh so unless you were fully **conversant** with the Welsh language you certainly weren't going to get a job there.

He was becoming **familiar** with the geography of the city.

Radio 1 is the station more **in touch** with what's going on in current music than any other in the country.

acquainted	conversant	in touch 23	unacquainted
au fait	familiar	out of touch	unfamiliar

7 THE 'EXCELLENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone deals with someone well, or uses something such as a piece of equipment well.

She could sew and she was very **adept** with her hands.

He was **excellent** with his own team but not **good** with his superiors.

He was not very **expert** with a mop, but he was trying hard.

adept	expert	handy	terrific
brilliant	good	marvellous	wonderful
excellent	great	okay	

8 THE 'CURSED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a person or group has something which is either desirable or undesirable. The noun group following *with* indicates what the person has.

Group Captain Bulman was **cursed** with a poor memory for names and, during the First World War, he called everyone Colonel or General.

The adjectives *blessed* and *cursed* are also used to describe a thing, such as a country or area of land.

Even those regions **blessed** with rain are still in the grip of a drought.

blessed	encumbered	tinged 2
burdened 1	imbued	
cursed	stuck 6	

9 THE 'AWASH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that there is a lot of something in a place, thing, or situation, which might be desirable or undesirable.

Its forests of ebony trees were **abundant** with wildlife.

TV is **awash** with nature programmes fronted by an army of bright young presenters.

Apparently the festive season is **fraught** with danger for pets.

The air was **heavy** with cigarette smoke.

'Charcoal Lane' is a record **imbued** with a love of life and the land.

The house itself, though large and airy and **redolent** with history, had one or two drawbacks.

The popular press in Britain has been **rife** with stories about their marriage.

They're as helpful as they can be but they're **snowed under** with work.

In summer, the place is **thick** with mosquitoes, with 25 different varieties to choose from.

The marble halls are **thronged** with lawyers, defendants, guards, anxious families, and a frantic group of courtroom journalists.

abundant	flush 8	overburdened	snowed under
abuzz	fraught	overrun	sodden
alive	heaped 2	packed	stacked
awash	heavy	rampant	stiff
burdened 2	imbued	redolent	strewn
bursting 1	infested	replete	thick
chock-a-block	jammed	rich	thronged
crammed	jam-packed	riddled	vibrant
crowded	laden	rife	
engorged	littered	ripe	
filled	loaded	smothered	

10 THE 'BRIGHT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something appears to shine brightly, physically or metaphorically.

In spring, the valleys are **ablaze** with colour, a botanist's paradise.

Allworthy leaned forward, his eyes **bright** with interest.

ablaze	aglow	radiant
afire	alight	
afire	bright	

11 THE 'FLECKED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has markings or objects of a particular kind all over it.

She is a small, neat woman with dark hair **flecked** with a little grey.

The walls are covered in paintings, and every surface is **scattered** with photographs, memorabilia and books.

banded	dotted	mottled	studded
beaded	flecked	patterned	
blotched	latticed	scattered	
dappled	marbled	spotted	

12 THE 'COATED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is covered or almost covered with some substance. The covering may have been done accidentally or on purpose.

Morsels of fish or chicken **coated** with a **crispy crumb** are a family favourite.

He poured a dollop of ketchup from a plastic container shaped like a tomato and **encrusted** with dried sauce.

The streets are **paved** with pink and ivory marble slabs.

caked	crusted	plastered
coated	encrusted	plated
covered	paved	walled

13 THE 'INLAID' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has patterns or marks which are either raised slightly above the surface, or are marked into the surface.

The paper on the walls was pale gold, **embossed** with swirling leaf designs.

The heavy dark table is **inlaid** with lighter wood.

The walls of these rotting buildings are freshly **pockmarked** with bullet holes.

embossed	inset	pocked
inlaid	pitted	pockmarked

14 THE 'DECORATED' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has some other kind of pattern or decoration on it. This includes:

- adjectives meaning 'decorated' e.g. *bedecked* and *emblazoned*
- adjectives meaning 'edged' e.g. *fringed* and *rimmed*
- adjectives indicating that something is slightly coloured e.g. *stained* and *tinged*

The walls are **decorated** with prints and photographs of a generally theatrical nature.

The southwestern shores are **fringed** with coral reefs and the eastern shores incorporate a stretch of beach suitable for sea bathing.

The road was scattered with empty cannon shells and **stained** with blood.

arrayed	edged	fringed	stained
bedecked	emblazoned	ornamented	tinged
decorated	finished	rimmed	tinted

15 THE 'FRAGRANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something has a particular taste or smell.

Rain had fallen. The air was **fragrant** with the smell of orange blossoms.

I ordered soup of the day, and was pleasantly surprised by a creamy carrot and sweet potato dish **spiced** with oregano.

flavoured	pungent	sweet
fragrant	spiced	

16 THE 'COMPARABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that two or more people, groups, or things are similar or connected in some way, or that they are different or unconnected. This includes adjectives that indicate:

- that things are connected e.g. *affiliated*, *associated*, *connected*
- that things are similar e.g. *cognate*, *identical*, *synonymous*
- that things are partly similar e.g. *comparable*, *competitive*, *consistent*
- that things are not similar e.g. *incompatible*, *inconsistent*
- that things happen at the same time e.g. *coincident*, *concomitant*
- that things are physically together e.g. *contiguous*, *flush*, *level*
- that things occur alternately e.g. *interlaced*, *interspersed*

We're not **affiliated** with a particular religion.

Sales figures were **comparable** with those at previous major exhibitions.

Post-mortem evidence on all the dead had shown that they died instantly of multiple injuries **consistent** with a crash.

Apply adhesive to the back of a tile with the spreader and press the tile into place. Make sure the tile is **flush** with the surrounding tiles.

A meditative lifestyle would strike most people as highly **incompatible** with life in a modern industrial society.

Tonight's special includes clips of the charming actress's interviews, **interspersed** with the most memorable moments from her films and comments from her friends and colleagues.

Eileen Loftus and Brenda Preece have created a collection of wedding dresses that are **synonymous** with style, quality and originality.

affiliated	concomitant 1	coterminous	level
aligned	concurrent	flush 7	level pegging
associated	congruent	identical	parallel
cognate	connected	incompatible	simultaneous
coincident	consistent	inconsistent	synonymous
commensurate	consonant	interchangeable	unconnected
comparable	contemporary	interlaced	
compatible	contiguous	interspersed	
competitive	continuous	irreconcilable	

17 THE 'OKAY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone likes or dislikes something. The noun group following *with* indicates the person or group who has the opinion.

She said he felt like her little brother; and that was **okay** with her.

This tomato has remained **popular** with gardeners all over the world.

In the case of *all right*, *fine*, and *okay*, the noun group following *with* sometimes indicates the thing that someone likes or finds acceptable.

'I hope he's **okay** with heights,' Roberts said.

all right okay unpopular
fine popular

18 THE 'LUCKY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is or is not lucky or successful in some way.

*I've been in two schools where I've been very **lucky** with heads of department.*

lucky unlucky
successful unsuccessful

19 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives that have this pattern. *Alone* and *closeted* are reciprocal adjectives.

*Should a gentleman be trusted if left **alone** with a lady?*

*He was **consumed** with anxiety to learn what else had been happening.*

*In less than twenty-four hours, he would be **finished** with the project.*

*Minibuses carrying schoolchildren must be **fitted** with seat belts.*

*Isabella is seven months' **pregnant** with her first baby.*

*You are usually very clever and **quick** with excuses.*

*People know most of their secrets are **safe** with me.*

Two adjectives, *amiss* and *wrong*, are also used in questions such as *What is wrong with you?* See also Sections 126 and 127.

*I began to be sick in the mornings and couldn't understand what was **wrong** with me.*

alone 2 finished 1 quick through 13
amiss fitted ready wrong 1,5
closeted free 14 resonant
concerned in touch 22 safe 11
consumed pregnant supplied

104 *it* v-link ADJ *that*

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a *that*-clause. The word *that* is sometimes omitted.

<i>it</i>	link verb	Adjective group	<i>that</i> -clause
It	seemed	likely	that the trip would be cancelled.
It	was	odd	that such a town had such a view.
It	is	plain	a mistake has been made.
It	's	ridiculous	you should drive all that way.
It	is	vital	you listen to the advice of your doctor.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

1 THE 'LIKELY' GROUP

- 2 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'MARVELLOUS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'AWFUL' GROUP
- 5 THE 'IMPORTANT' AND 'NECESSARY' GROUP
- 6 THE 'INTERESTING' AND 'SURPRISING' GROUP
- 7 THE 'RELEVANT' GROUP
- 8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'LIKELY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate whether something is likely or true, or not.

*It's **arguable** that Patrick and Sally's marriage could have been saved if he'd voiced his problems earlier.*

*Although we don't know what a baby really thinks at birth, it's **almost certain** that he doesn't realise he is an individual, separate from everything around him.*

*Our correspondent says that it is **improbable** that the Prime Minister will be forced to resign.*

*Given the mood of the country it is **inconceivable** that Parliament would object.*

*It seems **likely** that Mr Howard will not make major changes to the shadow Ministry.*

*One speaker said it was **perfectly plausible** that at some point in the future we could end up paying for our air.*

*Although we make every effort to ensure the information given is correct, it is **possible** some dates may change after we go to press.*

arguable guaranteed irrefutable uncertain
axiomatic imaginable likely unclear
believable implausible notorious undeniable
certain impossible plausible undisputed
conceivable improbable possible unimaginable
correct inconceivable probable unlikely
definite incontestable questionable unquestionable
demonstrable incontrovertible thinkable unthinkable
doubtful incredible 2 true 1 untrue
false indisputable unavoidable well-known
feasible inescapable unbelievable

2 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is obviously true.

*Dr Russell says the social changes have left many men confused. 'It is **becoming apparent** that men in particular are having trouble coping,' he said.*

*It is **quite obvious** that if people drink coffee, eat chocolate, smoke, drink alcohol, it is because they feel they derive some good from it.*

apparent 2 manifest transparent
clear 2 obvious
evident 2 plain 3

3 THE 'MARVELLOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the event or situation indicated by the *that*-clause is a good or desirable one. They include:

- words with a general meaning e.g. *brilliant, fantastic, marvellous*
- words with a specific meaning e.g. *appropriate, equitable, logical*

- words that describe the effect it has on someone e.g. *encouraging, exciting, reassuring*

This is a productive use: any adjective that means 'good' or 'desirable' can be used in this pattern. We show below the most frequent.

*Although we have complete freedom to go up to the computer studies room, in my subject area it's **far better** that you have a computer in the classroom.*

*I felt it was **logical** that I should finish my career with the club where it began.*

*Isn't it **marvellous** that these buildings have survived, she told herself.*

*It seems **entirely reasonable** that airline passengers who are unable to walk long distances should be provided with wheelchair assistance.*

*It's **reassuring** that only seven per cent of you have had an accident in your home in the last two years.*

acceptable	exciting	helpful	reassuring
admirable	fabulous	inspiring	refreshing
advisable	fair	laudable	right
appropriate	fantastic	logical	sensible
apt	fine	lovely	splendid
beneficial	fitting	lucky	terrific
brilliant	flattering	marvellous	timely
commendable	fortuitous	nice	understandable
convenient	fortunate	pleasing	useful
cool	good 6	preferable	wise
cute	gratifying	proper	wonderful
desirable	great	providential	
encouraging	healthy	realistic	
equitable	heartening	reasonable	

4 THE 'AWFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the event or situation indicated by the that-clause is a bad or undesirable one. They include:

- words with a general meaning e.g. *appalling, awful, deplorable*
- words with a specific meaning e.g. *immoral, hypocritical, unjust*
- words that describe the effect it has on someone e.g. *annoying, frustrating, sickening*

This is a productive use: any adjective that means 'bad' or 'undesirable' can be used in this pattern. We show below the most frequent.

*It is **awful** that it should end like this.*

*A police spokesman said: 'It is **very disturbing** that two lads so young were in possession of such a weapon and were willing to use it.'*

*I don't think there is too much sex on TV but it is **frustrating** that so many films centre their story around sex, or rely on it as a means to tell the story.*

*I sometimes think it's **so sad** you and Patrick have no children of your own.*

*First, they agreed it was **silly** that both of them should do it, then they couldn't agree who would be the one to do it, so they ended up both doing it.*

*It's now 30 years since Max Cullen, one of Australia's most gifted actors, made his screen debut in You Can't See Round Corners and it seems **extremely unjust** that he has never had a starring role until now.*

absurd	awful	confusing	daft
annoying	awkward	crazy	deplorable
appalling	bad	criminal	depressing

diabolical	horrific	outrageous	terrifying
disappointing	hypocritical	pathetic	tragic
disgraceful	illogical	perverse	unacceptable
disgusting	immoral	preposterous	unconscionable
disheartening	improper	regrettable	undesirable
dismaying	inappropriate	reprehensible	unfair
disquieting	indefensible	ridiculous	unfortunate
distasteful	inexcusable	sad	unjust
distressing	infuriating	scandalous	unreasonable
disturbing	iniquitous	shameful	unsatisfactory
dreadful	intolerable	shocking	worrying
frustrating	lamentable	sickening	wrong 9
galling	laughable	silly	
hard 2	ludicrous	stupid	
heartbreaking	monstrous	suspicious	
horrendous	obscene	terrible	

5 THE 'IMPORTANT' AND 'NECESSARY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the event or situation indicated by the that-clause is important or necessary.

*It's **important** that we make everyone stand up and pay attention.*

*At home, it is sometimes **necessary** that children have to share rooms.*

*In emergency situations it is **vital** a ship in distress is found quickly.*

The verb group in the that-clause sometimes includes the modal should.

*It was **vital** that everyone should work together to save the country.*

The verb group in the that-clause is sometimes in the subjunctive.

*It is **important** that a pregnancy be planned.*

compulsory	imperative	necessary	vital
critical	important	paramount	
crucial	indispensable	unnecessary	
essential	mandatory	urgent	

6 THE 'INTERESTING' AND 'SURPRISING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the event or situation indicated by the that-clause is expected or unexpected. They include adjectives that indicate that:

- something is surprising e.g. *amazing, astonishing, surprising*
- something is normal or ordinary e.g. *common, normal, typical*
- something is out of the ordinary e.g. *incongruous, odd, peculiar*
- something is interesting or puzzling e.g. *baffling, interesting, notable*

*When Norwegians came into an area, it was **common** that the first thing that they established was a school and then a church.*

*It's **interesting** that she's never asked what he looks like.*

*Isn't it **a bit odd** that she lives with two husbands?*

amazing	bizarre	extraordinary	indicative
anomalous	characteristic	fascinating	inevitable
astonishing	common	funny 2	instructive
astounding	conspicuous	incomprehensible	interesting
baffling	curious 2	incongruous	intriguing

miraculous	odd	remarkable	surprising
natural	paradoxical	revealing	typical
newsworthy	peculiar	staggering	unexpected
normal	perplexing	startling	unprecedented
notable	predictable	strange	unusual
noteworthy	puzzling	striking	
noticeable	rare	suggestive	

7 THE 'RELEVANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the event or situation indicated by the *that*-clause is relevant or irrelevant.

*Don't you think it's **relevant** that he doesn't know me?*

*It may not be **entirely irrelevant** that the minister in charge of minerals operations at that time was one of our own mining graduates.*

incidental	pertinent	significant
irrelevant	relevant	

8 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

*It's **ironic** that what has long been regarded as a sign of good health has become a serious health problem.*

*It is **very symbolic** that this important meeting between the President of the Soviet Union and the President of the United States will be taking place in Helsinki.*

coincidental	immaterial	ironical	symptomatic
elementary	implicit	sufficient	
hilarious	ironic	symbolic	

105 it v-link ADJ for n that

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for* and a *that*-clause.

it	verb group	Adjective group	for	noun group	that-clause
It	's	lucky	for	Jessie	that my work is very important to me.
It	is	vital	for	him	that he returns home soon.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FORTUNATE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 3 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'FORTUNATE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is beneficial or not beneficial to someone or something.

*It was **fortunate** for George that the cinema manager could vouch that George had been in the cinema all evening.*

fortunate	lucky	unfortunate
good	sad	unlucky

2 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important.

*I believe it is **very important** for inmates that we on the staff don't create a male/female divide.*

The verb group in the *that*-clause sometimes includes the modal *should*.

*It was **essential** for Whitman that America should produce its own forms of art, poems, schools, and theology.*

The verb group in the *that*-clause is sometimes in the subjunctive.

*He said it was **vital** for peace that the Soviet Union act as another super-power.*

essential	important	vital
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3 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There is one other adjective, *enough*, which has this pattern.

*What she would do when she got there was something Jocelyn hadn't bothered to work out. It was **enough** for her that if she got there it should take the Chalet School folk some time to find her.*

106 it v-link ADJ of n that

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of* and a *that*-clause.

it	link verb	Adjective group	of	noun group	that-clause
It	was	typical	of	Livy	that she had telephoned.

The adjectives with this pattern indicate that an action or situation is typical of someone.

*It was **characteristic** of Helmut Kohl that, unlike the other leaders I had met, he came straight to the point, namely the leadership election.*

characteristic	typical
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107 it v-link ADJ to n that

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to* and a *that*-clause.

Adjectives

it	link verb	Adjective group	to	noun group	that clause
It	was	clear	to	her	that he hadn't been listening.
It	is	important	to	us	that most of our friends are actors.
It	was	inconceivable	to	him	that Pitt could die.

The prepositional phrase indicates whose opinion you are giving.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP
- 2 THE 'FAIR' AND 'LUDICROUS' GROUP
- 3 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP

1 THE 'OBVIOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is obvious. The adjectives *clear* and *obvious* are the ones most frequently used in this pattern.

In spite of the talk of a post-feminist era, it is clear to us that men are still clinging to their privilege and power.

It was obvious to me that Mary desperately needed a friend near her.

apparent	evident	plain
clear	obvious	

2 THE 'FAIR' AND 'LUDICROUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is good or bad in some way. This includes adjectives such as *fair* or *ludicrous* which judge something as good or bad, where the verb is always *seem*, and adjectives such as *gratifying* or *disappointing* which indicate someone's reaction to something, where the verb is often *be*. All adjectives which indicate that a situation is good or bad are occasionally used with this pattern. We list here the adjectives most frequently used in this way.

It was very disappointing to me that Lisa felt this way.

It seemed only fair to me that she should have the money.

It seems ludicrous to me that a variety of apple that was produced in the time of Queen Victoria suddenly becomes illegal for sale in 1975.

crazy	fair	ironic	ludicrous
disappointing	gratifying	logical	painful

3 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important.

It's crucial to us that the telescope does work, and works well.

It's important to me that I enjoy myself.

crucial	important
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4 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is interesting, unusual, or surprising. These

include adjectives of judgement such as *extraordinary*, where the verb is often *seem*, and adjectives that indicate someone's reaction, such as *interesting*, where the verb is usually *be*. We include here *incredible*, *inconceivable*, and *unimaginable*, which indicate that something is too surprising to be believed.

It seems extraordinary to me that more guidance isn't given to working mothers nowadays.

It's incredible to us that this guy got a firearms certificate.

Some of the images in your album are very dark, and it's interesting to me that you're so young and just beginning your career.

amazing	fascinating	interesting	surprising
astounding	incomprehensible	odd	unimaginable
bizarre	inconceivable	strange	
extraordinary	incredible	striking	

108 *it v n ADJ that*

The adjective group follows introductory *it*, a verb group, and a noun group, and is followed by a *that*-clause. The verb *make* occurs most commonly in this pattern. *Drive* occasionally occurs, with a small number of adjectives.

it	verb group	noun group	Adjective group	that clause
It	makes	me	sad	that they don't get the chance.

Most adjectives with this pattern indicate that someone is angry or unhappy with a situation. *Happy* and *proud* indicate that someone is happy with a situation.

It makes me angry that women think so little about their bodies that they use abortion as a means of contraceptive.

Thank you for coming. It makes me happy that you respect his memory in this beautiful way.

It makes me sick that anybody should doubt my commitment.

Crazy and *mad* are used with the verb *drive*.

It's driving me barking mad that I can't remember who wrote it.

angry	happy	resentful
crazy	mad 3,6	sad
furious	proud	sick

109 *it v n as ADJ that*

The adjective group follows introductory *it*, a verb group, a noun group, and the preposition *as*, and is followed by a *that*-clause. The only verb which occurs with this pattern is *strike*.

it	verb group	noun group	as	Adjective group	that-clause
It	struck	her	as	unusual	that a man would write such a note as this.

Adjectives with this pattern indicate that something is odd or ridiculous.

I often saw my father weep and it never struck me as odd that a man should express emotion.

It frankly struck me as strange that Anchorage even bothers to have a zoo, seeing as how there are already plenty of large and sometimes hostile animals wandering loose around the city.

absurd	odd	unusual
curious	strange	

110 it v-link ADJ wh

The adjective group preceded by introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a finite *wh*-clause.

The *wh*-clause in this pattern indicates something that is uncertain or or not known, or the opposite. For example, in *It is puzzling why farmers do not convert to organic agriculture*, the reason why farmers do not convert to organic farming is not known.

it	link verb	Adjective group	wh-clause
It	's not	apparent	why it happens.
It	's	doubtful	whether I'd recognise him again.
It	's	immaterial	what he thinks.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'CLEAR' GROUP
- 2 THE 'INEXPLICABLE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

1 THE 'CLEAR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is certain, uncertain, or obvious. Most of these adjectives are used with a range of finite *wh*-clauses.

It's not certain whether his outfit, goggles or bike are authentic antique articles.

It was not clear what had caused the bus to crash through the bridge railings, Sgt Monk said.

It should be obvious why motorists must stop and give way to pedestrians on a crossing.

Debatable, doubtful, and questionable are typically followed by a clause beginning with *how*, *if*, or *whether*.

With the night life running until dawn, it's debatable how much rest you'll get during your stay.

Indeed, he said, it was doubtful if the bank had ever been profitable since its establishment in 1972.

Arguable, dubious, and undecided are typically followed by a clause beginning with *whether*.

It is extremely dubious whether these employees will ever be given any rights at all.

Understandable is typically followed by a clause beginning with *why* or *how*.

The Belgian team know all about Saunders and it's understandable why they hate the sight of him.

Clear, obvious, and unclear are occasionally followed by a *wh-to-inf* clause. This pattern is *it v-link ADJ wh-to-inf*.

It is not clear how to reconcile these results.

apparent	debatable	obvious	unclear
arguable	doubtful	plain	undecided
certain	dubious	questionable	understandable
clear	evident	uncertain	unknown

In the case of *clear*, *debatable*, *doubtful*, and *unclear*, there is sometimes the preposition *as* to between the adjective and the *wh*-clause. This pattern is *it v-link ADJ as to wh*.

It was not clear as to where the two persons who were killed were shot.

2 THE 'INEXPLICABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is not understood. The *wh*-clause typically begins with *why*.

It was inexplicable why a teenage girl had careered onto the road like a toddler.

baffling	mysterious
inexplicable	puzzling

3 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important or unimportant. The *wh*-clause may begin with any one of a range of *wh*-words.

Studies have shown that it is also important what a mother herself eats while she is breast-feeding.

Mr Hutton said it was irrelevant who conducted the studies.

immaterial	irrelevant
important	unimportant

111 it v-link ADJ what/how

The adjective group is preceded by introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a clause beginning with *what* or *how*. This clause indicates a thing or situation. In some cases it indicates that something is true to a great extent. For example, *It is amazing what can be achieved* indicates that 'a lot can be achieved', and *it's interesting how unaffected he is* indicates that 'he is completely unaffected'.

it	link verb	Adjective group	what/how clause
It	's	funny	how things work out.
It	's	marvellous	what people can do when they try.

This pattern is used to give a judgement about a thing or situation before mentioning what that thing or situation is. It is particularly frequent in spoken English, and is productive: any adjective which expresses a judgement can be used in this way. We list below the most frequent.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FANTASTIC' GROUP
- 2 THE 'TERRIBLE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'AMAZING' GROUP
- 4 THE 'TRUE' GROUP

1 THE 'FANTASTIC' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a thing or situation is judged to be good.

*I think it's **fantastic** what they're doing. I just wish all the orphanages were like that.*

*I kept telling myself, it's **great** what you've already done even if you don't win this tournament.*

*It's **nice** how life can fix it so you don't have to go it alone.*

*It is **wonderful** how people are becoming enthusiastic about the whole scheme.*

fantastic	great	marvellous	right 8
good	lovely	nice	wonderful

2 THE 'TERRIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a thing or a situation is judged to be bad.

*When one looks over many of Brisbane's parks it is **appalling** how much litter, bottles and food scraps are scattered over them and our streets.*

*I mean I don't stand up for them – I think it's **disgusting** what they've done or what their father has done.*

*What really staggered me was his treatment in America. It was **really shocking** what they did to him there!*

*It was **terrible** what was happening in the world.*

absurd	depressing	pathetic	tragic
appalling	disgusting	sad	unfortunate
awful	dreadful	shocking	wrong 9
crazy	horrible	stupid	
criminal	outrageous	terrible	

3 THE 'AMAZING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a thing or situation is judged to be surprising, unusual, or interesting.

*It is **amazing** what can be achieved with good job training.*

*It was **extraordinary** how people would buy a property and then promptly rush with hardly any thought into submitting plans for an extension.*

*It's **interesting** how unaffected he is by his surroundings or a person's status. He doesn't care.*

*It's **so odd** how the smallest events can cause the greatest realizations.*

*It was **strange** how the burglar only took what belonged to me personally.*

amazing	inconceivable	noticeable	striking
astonishing	incredible	odd	surprising
curious	interesting	remarkable	unbelievable
extraordinary	intriguing	staggering	uncanny
fascinating	ironic	startling	weird
funny 2	notable	strange	

4 THE 'TRUE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something that someone has said is judged to be true or untrue.

*'It's **true** what actors say about the bad guy getting all the best lines,' he said.*

right 1	true	wrong 4
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112 it v-link ADJ when/if

The adjective group is preceded by introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a clause beginning with *when* or *if*. This clause indicates a possible situation and the adjective indicates a judgement about that situation.

it	link verb	Adjective group	when/if clause
It	is	horrible	when your friends seem to be letting you down.
It	would be	lovely	if there was more peace in the world.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'AWFUL' GROUP
- 2 THE 'FRUSTRATING' GROUP
- 3 THE 'DIFFICULT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'GOOD' GROUP
- 5 THE 'EXCITING' GROUP
- 6 THE 'STRANGE' GROUP
- 7 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'AWFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is judged to be bad. Some of these, such as *awful*, *horrible*, and *terrible*, indicate that something is bad in a general way. Others, such as *dangerous*, *inconvenient*, and *irresponsible*, indicate that something is bad for a specific reason.

*I think it's **particularly awful** when one person loves the other person but the other one doesn't.*

*It is **awkward** when you have to turn down requests from other people, but it inevitably happens from time to time.*

I think it would be disastrous if the divisional championship was scrapped.
 It would be extremely inconvenient if any news of his disappearance were to be made public, at least during the next twenty-four hours.
 Would it look rude if she took out a book? Regretfully, she decided it would.
 It must be terrible if anything ever goes wrong with one of these machines.

absurd	dreadful	perverse	unacceptable
appalling	horrible	regrettable	unfair
awful	inappropriate	ridiculous	unforgiveable
awkward	inconvenient	rude	unfortunate
bad	intolerable	scandalous	unjust
catastrophic	irresponsible	silly	unsatisfactory
damaging	monstrous	stupid	unthinkable
dangerous	outrageous	terrible	wrong
disastrous	pathetic	tragic	

2 THE 'FRUSTRATING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a possible situation makes someone feel angry, sad, or afraid.

It's certainly depressing when you have an entire year when it doesn't rain and you watch your crop wither.

It's frustrating when people try to do things and are held up with red tape.

I can tell you it is real scary when you are going 246mph down the straight and your throttle sticks open.

annoying	disheartening	humiliating	shocking
boring	distressing	hurtful	terrifying
confusing	disturbing	irritating	tiresome
depressing	frustrating	painful	tough 4
disappointing	galling	sad	
discouraging	heartbreaking	scary	

3 THE 'DIFFICULT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is difficult or easy to cope with.

Don't worry, dear. I'm sure you did your best. It's difficult when they're not used to country ways.

It isn't easy when you have parents who don't care.

difficult	hard 2	tough 5
easy	simple	

4 THE 'GOOD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is judged to be good. Some of these, such as good, fantastic, and wonderful, indicate that something is good in a general way. Others, such as convenient, fitting, and healthy, indicate that something is judged to be good for a specific reason.

It would be good if a few more people grew gardens like this.

It would be helpful if you could tell us if you are planning to change the amount of gas you use. For example, you may have central heating put in.

A lot of women would agree with me when I say that it's really nice when you come across a woman who is speaking her mind.

Are you sure it's okay if I stay with you?

It would have been perfect if she'd won for best actress, but she didn't.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if I got the flat!

all right	fitting	nice	super
appropriate	funny 1	okay	superb
beneficial	good	perfect	terrific
brilliant	great	pleasant	tremendous
convenient	healthy	preferable	useful
cool 9	helpful	reasonable	valuable
desirable	ideal	satisfactory	wise
fair	lovely	sensible	wonderful
fantastic	marvellous	special	
fine	natural	splendid	

5 THE 'EXCITING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something makes someone feel happy in some way.

It was all very exciting when we first moved to London and a great adventure.

It would be reassuring if the bishop expressed his public support for the clergy.

amusing	heartening	satisfying
encouraging	reassuring	
exciting	rewarding	

6 THE 'STRANGE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is judged to be strange, surprising, or interesting.

I think it will be amazing if they make another record together.

Wouldn't it be interesting if the only gospel that survived was Timothy's?

In a world where humans grow old, tadpoles change into frogs, and milk turns into cheese, it would be strange if language alone remained unaltered.

It's such a novelty to have a man choosing to ask my opinion on anything that it's hardly surprising if I get carried away and start tossing out a few home truths!

When you're part of a team it feels weird if you leave for a while.

amazing	extraordinary	rare	surprising
astonishing	funny 2	remarkable	unusual
astounding	interesting	significant	weird
bizarre	odd	strange	

7 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern.

It would have been different if it had been Nigel driving the car.

It would be ironic if we took severe action on acid rain, and thus helped make the greenhouse effect even worse.

different	(the) same	understandable
ironic	serious	
quicker	sufficient	

113 it v-link ADJ to-inf

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a to-infinitive clause.

it	verb group	Adjective group	to-infinitive clause
It	is	easy	to see what he means.
It	is	essential	to pay in advance.
It	's	hard	to believe he just forgot where he was.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ACCURATE' AND 'ILLOGICAL' GROUP
- 2 THE 'EASY' AND 'DIFFICULT' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SELFISH' AND 'DANGEROUS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'EXCITING' AND 'SAFE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'SURPRISING' AND 'INTERESTING' GROUP
- 6 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 7 THE 'LEGAL' GROUP
- 8 THE 'FUNNY' GROUP
- 9 THE 'ENOUGH' GROUP

1 THE 'ACCURATE' AND 'ILLOGICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an idea or statement is accurate, obvious, true, or untrue.

*It is **illogical** to believe that old age or a love of privacy should entitle her to expect special treatment.*

*It is at least **plausible** to conclude that rainfall patterns will shift and a drought will occur.*

The adjectives *accurate*, *fair*, *obvious*, *true*, and *untrue* are often used in phrases such as *It would be fair to say that*.

*Anita did not take much notice of the types of people present. It would be **more accurate** to say that she did not see them.*

*It may seem **obvious** to state this, but I am constantly amazed at the small percentage of patients who, given that they feel better avoiding a food, still can't wait to go back to eating it.*

The adjective *plain* is typically used with the verb *see*.

*Why did she make those awful chewing movements with her mouth when it was **plain** to see she hadn't anything to chew?*

accurate	fanciful	misleading	unfair
anachronistic	illogical	obvious	untrue
correct	illusory	plain	valid
erroneous	inaccurate	plausible	wrong
fair	inconceivable	right	
fallacious	incorrect	slandorous	
false	logical	true	

2 THE 'EASY' AND 'DIFFICULT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that doing something is easy or difficult. The adjectives *difficult*, *easy*, *hard*, *impossible*, and *possible* are particularly frequent in this pattern.

*If you are in a new country it is always **difficult** to get work; people don't know you and you don't have contacts.*

*It would be **easy** to lose heart, but to lose heart would serve no purpose, other than to ruin our lives.*

*In many cases it is **quite possible** to alter or extend a house to meet changed needs.*

awkward	hard	possible	tough
difficult	impossible	practicable	tricky
easy	impracticable	practical	
feasible	impractical	simple	

3 THE 'SELFISH' AND 'DANGEROUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is undesirable in some way. This may be something that someone does, as in *It would be selfish to marry*, or something that happens to someone, as in *It's annoying to have people clicking their fingers at you*.

This group includes adjectives that indicate that a situation or action

- makes someone feel bad e.g. *annoying*, *disappointing*, *shocking*
- is morally wrong e.g. *abhorrent*, *dishonest*, *selfish*
- shows a lack of sense or manners e.g. *crass*, *discourteous*, *ludicrous*, *stupid*
- is dangerous e.g. *dangerous*, *hazardous*, *suicidal*
- has an undesirable outcome e.g. *counterproductive*, *fatal*
- serves no purpose e.g. *futile*, *idle*, *pointless*

*It's **annoying** to have people clicking their fingers at you to get your attention.*

*It is always a **little dangerous** to let a child loose in an action playground on his own while he is very young.*

*It's **more expensive** to live alone and it can be very isolating.*

*It's **ludicrous** to give such a small amount to children's services. There is nothing more important than the mental health of children.*

*I know from experience it's **pointless** to try putting a born worrier's mind at ease.*

*I thought it would be **selfish** to marry if I were going to be killed.*

abhorrent	daft	dreadful	harsh
absurd	dangerous	expensive	hazardous
agonizing	defeatist	facile	heartbreaking
amoral	degrading	farcical	hopeless
annoying	depressing	fashionable	horrible
awful	disappointing	fatal	horrifying
bad	disastrous	fatuous	humiliating
barbarous	disconcerting	foolhardy	hypocritical
barmy	discouraging	foolish	idle
childish	discourteous	fraudulent	immoral
counterproductive	disgraceful	fruitless	impertinent
cowardly	dishonest	frustrating	impolite
crass	disingenuous	futile	inadvisable
crazy	disquieting	galling	inappropriate
criminal	distressing	grotesque	incoherent
cynical	disturbing	harmful	inconsistent

inhumane	painful	shocking	undesirable
insane	pathetic	sickening	unethical
insulting	pointless	silly	unfair
intolerable	premature	simplistic	unjust
invidious	preposterous	stupid	unpatriotic
irresponsible	rash	suicidal	unrealistic
irritating	ridiculous	taboo	unreasonable
laughable	risky	tedious	unsafe
ludicrous	rude	terrible	unseemly
meaningless	sad	terrifying	unwarranted
mischievous	scandalous	tragic	unwise
misguided	scary	traumatic	useless
naive	selfish	unacceptable	wasteful
obscene	senseless	uncharitable	wrong 9
outrageous	shameful	uncomfortable	

4 THE 'EXCITING' AND 'SAFE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is good or desirable in some way. This may be something that someone does, as in *It is sensible to buy holiday insurance* or something that happens to someone, as in *It's marvellous to have sunshine most of the time*.

This group includes adjectives that indicate that a situation or action

- is pleasant to experience e.g. *exciting, heartening, pleasing*
- is morally good e.g. *courageous, ethical, laudable*
- shows thoughtfulness for other people e.g. *kind, polite*
- is appropriate to the circumstances e.g. *appropriate, best, sensible*
- has a desirable outcome e.g. *beneficial, economic, safe*
- is well thought of e.g. *chic, cool, trendy*

The adjectives *good* and *safe* are particularly frequent in this pattern. *Good* is often in the comparative form *better* or the superlative form *best*.

I thought it was best to announce my decision now.

Although sunglasses are not allowed in class, students said it was cool to be able to wear them around school.

Where did she get the idea that it is courageous to give up your life?

It was exciting to see the house taking shape.

It is not safe to carry your baby in your arms.

It would obviously be sensible to spend more money on improving the rail network to get people off the roads.

The adjective *pertinent* is used to introduce something the speaker wishes to say.

At this point it is pertinent to note that this collaborative learning process works both ways.

acceptable	cool	expedient	honest
advantageous	correct 8	fantastic	honourable
advisable	courageous	fine	illuminating
appropriate	desirable	fitting	impressive
audacious	economic	good	incredible 1
beneficial	effective	grand	inspiring
brilliant	efficient	gratifying	instructive
cheap	encouraging	great	irresistible
chic	ethical	healthy	justifiable
clever	exciting	heartening	kind
convenient	exhilarating	helpful	laudable

lovely	politic	right 1.8	terrific
marvellous	preferable	safe	therapeutic
meaningful	profitable	salutary	thrilling
moral	proper	satisfying	timely
nice	prudent	sensible	trendy
okay	quicker	smart	useful
opportune	realistic	splendid	valuable
pertinent	reasonable	super	wise
pleasant	reassuring	sweet	wonderful
pleasing	refreshing	tactful	worthwhile
polite	rewarding	tempting	

5 THE 'SURPRISING' AND 'INTERESTING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is expected or unexpected. This includes adjectives which indicate

- that something is ordinary e.g. *customary, normal, usual*
- that something is not ordinary e.g. *extraordinary, odd, rare*
- that something is surprising e.g. *amazing, remarkable, surprising*
- that something is interesting e.g. *fascinating, interesting, intriguing*

The adjective *interesting* is particularly frequent in this pattern.

When Japanese people visit friends, it's customary to bring a gift.

It will be interesting to see how the players perform against the best team in the world.

It seems pretty odd to allow a documentary to be made about your honeymoon.

It's surprising to discover that geologists can learn about the geological past of Europe and Africa by flying an aircraft off the coast of Canada.

amazing	extraordinary	natural	strange
astonishing	fascinating	normal	striking
bizarre	funny 2	odd	surprising
common	human	rare	traditional
commonplace	incredible 2	remarkable	uncanny
conventional	inevitable	significant	unnatural
curious	interesting	staggering	unusual
customary	intriguing	startling	usual

6 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that some action is important or necessary. The adjectives *essential*, *important*, and *necessary* are particularly frequent in this pattern.

It is important to check the success of a university's graduates on the job market.

It is no longer necessary to turn to drugs for the relief of hay fever.

compulsory	essential	mandatory	vital
critical	imperative	necessary	
crucial	important	unnecessary	

7 THE 'LEGAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is allowed to happen, either by law or by agreement, or that it is not allowed to happen.

It was not allowable to touch the face, only the hands and feet.

Could you please tell me if it is legal to marry your cousin?

It would be unconstitutional to execute an innocent person.

allowable	impermissible	legitimate	unlawful
constitutional	lawful	permissible	
illegal	legal	unconstitutional	

8 THE 'FUNNY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is amusing.

Were Tod and Mike really immature enough to think it was funny to frighten people like that?

amusing	hilarious
funny	ironic

9 THE 'ENOUGH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the situation indicated in the pattern is all that is required.

These fish are not for catching. It's enough to know that they are there.

enough	sufficient
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114 it v-link ADJ for n to-inf

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *for* and a **to-infinitive clause**. The person or thing indicated by the noun group is responsible for the action indicated in the to-infinitive clause.

it	verb group	Adjective group	for	noun group	to-infinitive clause
It	is	costly	for	rivals	to compete.
It	was	fashionable	for	the rich	to eat white flour.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'LUDICROUS' GROUP
- 2 THE 'NICE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'EASY' AND 'DANGEROUS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'NORMAL' AND 'RARE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'NECESSARY' AND 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'POSSIBLE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'ENOUGH' GROUP

1 THE 'LUDICROUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an activity is judged to be unwise or unacceptable. The activity is indicated by the to-infinitive clause, and the person or group responsible for the activity is indicated by the noun group following *for*. If the to-infinitive clause is passive, the noun group following *for* indicates the person or group affected by the activity.

It is illegal for a hospital to reveal hospital records.

It is illogical for the Government to be blamed for a drought.

It would be ludicrous for him to travel economy or stay in a third-rate hotel.

It's outrageous for people to play politics in a situation in which our cities are burning.

I think it is wrong for anybody to say 'You will teach in this way'.

In most cases, the judgement that something is illegal, ludicrous, wrong, and so on, is made by the speaker or writer. In some cases, however, the noun group following *for* indicates the person who makes the judgement. The adjectives *insulting*, *offensive*, and *shameful* are sometimes used in this way, and the adjectives *disappointing*, *painful*, *tempting*, and *terrible* are usually used in this way.

It was disappointing for Toby not to see a tractor.

It was painful for Joni to confess that she had only herself to blame.

absurd	immoral	pointless	unjust
bad	impermissible	ridiculous	unlawful
costly	improper	shameful	unrealistic
counterproductive	inappropriate	stupid	unreasonable
foolish	insulting	unacceptable	unwise
futile	irresponsible	unconstitutional	useless
hypocritical	ludicrous	unethical	wrong
illegal	offensive	unfair	
illogical	outrageous	unhealthy	

2 THE 'NICE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an activity or situation is judged to be advisable or beneficial. The activity or situation is indicated by the to-infinitive clause, and the person or group responsible for it is normally indicated by the noun group following *for*. If the to-infinitive clause is passive, the noun group following *for* indicates the person or group affected by the activity or situation.

Eventually it became acceptable for blokes to have their hair done at a hairdresser.

No one believes that it is legitimate for women to go around stabbing men, but without understanding the appalling circumstances in which these things happen, we cannot easily make a judgment.

'I think it would be nice for everybody to have a Rolls-Royce,' she said, dead serious.

While it would be preferable for all airports to be situated away from residential areas, obviously this is not always possible.

It would be quite understandable for him to feel you were sticking with him only from a sense of duty.

In the case of *good* and *great*, the noun group following *for* sometimes indicates a thing which benefits from the activity or situation indicated by the to-infinitive clause. The speaker or writer is responsible for the activity or situation.

I've decided it is better for my career to be there full time.

They kept telling me it was great for publicity to have pictures of me in my collar and tie strumming my little banjo.

In most cases, the judgement that something is *acceptable*, *good*, *great*, and so on, is made by the speaker or writer. In some cases, however, the noun group following *for* indicates the person who is considered to be making the judgement. The adjectives *gratifying*, *great*, *interesting*, *lovely*, *nice*, *okay*, *satisfying*, and *worthwhile* are often used in this way.

It must have been gratifying for you to discover after all that your father had been a hero.

Adjectives

I think it's probably **interesting** for you to know how I came to writing.

acceptable	fashionable	legitimate	reasonable
advisable	feasible	logical	right
appropriate	fine	lovely	satisfying
cheaper	good	nice	sensible
constitutional	gratifying	okay	tremendous
convenient	great	permissible	understandable
correct	healthy	preferable	useful
ethical	helpful	profitable	wise
excellent	interesting	proper	worthwhile
fair	legal	rational	

3 THE 'EASY' AND 'DANGEROUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action or situation is easy or difficult, dangerous or safe. Usually the person or group involved is indicated by the noun group following *for*. For example, in *It would be **dangerous** for him to come back*, the person who would be in danger is indicated by *him*. Sometimes, the person or group involved is not indicated in the pattern. For example, in *If it would be **dangerous** for the train to start*, use the emergency handle, it is the passengers on the train who would be in danger.

I did not reply. It was **difficult** for me to get my breath.

It was not **easy** for Bessie to come to terms with Laura's closeness to Janis.

Is it really **safe** for women to go everywhere on their own?

awkward	easy	safe
dangerous	hard	simple
difficult	risky	tough

4 THE 'NORMAL' AND 'RARE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an event or situation is common or uncommon. The event or situation is indicated by the prepositional phrase beginning with *for* and the to-infinitive clause.

Between the ages of three and seven, it's **normal** for children to complain of unusual aches and pains, because they know it gets adult attention very quickly.

All these near misses may sound worrying, but it is **extremely rare** for asteroids to collide with planets.

In ancient warfare it was **routine** for the victors to slaughter the retreating enemy.

It was **unusual** for there to be no problems.

common	natural	standard	unprecedented
commonplace	normal	traditional	unusual
customary	rare	typical	usual
extraordinary	routine	uncommon	

5 THE 'NECESSARY' AND 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action or situation is necessary or important, or not necessary or important. The action or situation is indicated by the prepositional phrase beginning with *for* and the to-infinitive clause.

At one time it was **compulsory** for students to come to the degree congregation.

It is **essential** for there to be established codes of practice.

He said it was also **important** for students to have a firm grounding in any subject before they learnt how to teach it.

It's **quite unnecessary** for you to bother yourself with complex arithmetic when you have better things to do.

compulsory	essential	necessary	unnecessary
critical	imperative	needful	vital
crucial	important	obligatory	

6 THE 'POSSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an event or situation is possible or impossible. The event or situation is indicated by the prepositional phrase beginning with *for* and the to-infinitive clause.

'People said it would be **impossible** for me ever to get fit enough to ride again, but I refused to believe it,' he said.

We should ask whether it is **possible** for there to be too much of a good thing.

impossible	inconceivable	possible
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7 THE 'ENOUGH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the action or situation indicated in the pattern is all that is required.

It's not **enough** for doctors to ask a few questions here and there.

It's no longer **sufficient** for us to say that we're a leader in technology and that we provide the best quality care.

enough	sufficient
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115 it v-link ADJ of n to-inf

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *of* and a to-infinitive clause. The noun group indicates the person or thing responsible for the action indicated in the to-infinitive clause.

it	verb group	Adjective group	of	noun group	to-infinitive clause
It	is	cheeky	of	us	to tell them what to do.
It	was	lovely	of	them	to help me.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'KIND' GROUP
- 2 THE 'STUPID' GROUP
- 3 THE 'TYPICAL' GROUP

1 THE 'KIND' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the action indicated in the to-infinitive clause is judged to

be good in some way, for example because it is brave or wise.

*'I'm very grateful to you, Harry,' she said softly. 'It was **big** of you to take the risk.'*

*It was **courageous** of him to speak out.*

*It was **very kind** of him to think of me when there are so many to think of.*

*It was **nice** of you to come.*

*I think it was **wise** of your father to do what he did.*

big	fair	lovely	sensible
brave	generous	nice	smart
clever	good	prudent	sweet
courageous	great	responsible	thoughtful
decent	kind	right	wise

2 THE 'STUPID' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the action indicated in the to-infinitive clause is judged to be bad in some way.

*It's **arrogant** of us to expect our pop stars to be beyond human influences.*

*It is **disingenuous** of Shell to inform us that revenues from the Natural Gas Project will not start flowing until early next century.*

*'It would have been **rude** of me not to pick you up,' said Rufus.*

*It was **stupid** of you to dash away and buy a ring.*

*I thought it was **wrong** of politicians to interfere in sport.*

absurd	foolish	naive	thoughtless
arrogant	gutless	negligent	unfair
cheeky	hypocritical	perverse	unkind
childish	immoral	presumptuous	unprofessional
churlish	improper	rude	unreasonable
clumsy	impudent	selfish	unworthy
cruel	irrational	shameful	wrong
disgraceful	irresponsible	silly	
disingenuous	mean	stupid	

3 THE 'TYPICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the action indicated in the to-infinitive clause is typical or not typical of the person indicated by the noun group following of.

*It was **typical** of him to make his presence felt in every situation.*

characteristic typical uncharacteristic

116 *it v n ADJ to-inf*

The adjective group follows introductory *it*, a verb group, and a noun group, and is followed by a to-infinitive clause. The noun group following the verb indicates a person or group, the to-infinitive clause indicates a situation, and the adjective group indicates how someone reacts to that situation.

Only the verb *make* commonly occurs in this pattern. *Drive* occasionally occurs, with a small number of adjectives. The most frequent verbs in the to-infinitive clause are *hear*, *read*, *see*, and *think*.

it	verb group	noun group	adjective group	to-infinitive clause
It	made	me	miserable	to see what had taken place.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP
- 2 THE 'SAD' GROUP
- 3 THE 'SICK' AND 'NERVOUS' GROUP
- 4 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP
- 5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ANGRY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is angry about a situation.

*It makes me **angry** to think they have money to spend on something like this.*

*It makes me **furious** to think they can buy a bus for dancers to tour but reject an ambulance for disabled people.*

angry furious mad 3

2 THE 'SAD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is sad or regrets something about a situation.

*It makes me **sad** to see all the good work we have done devalued in this way.*

miserable sad

3 THE 'SICK' AND 'NERVOUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate a range of other negative feelings.

*It made me **ashamed** to see what some people are capable of.*

*It was terrible. She fell on her head and it made me **ill** to see her lying there like that.*

*It makes me **nervous** to sit here and to tell you that I hate my mother.*

*It makes me **sick** to think of the way that people celebrate Columbus Day. What is there to celebrate apart from greed and torture and death?*

Batty, crazy, and mad are used with the verb drive.

*It **must** nearly **drive** you crazy to live a life so devoid of stimulus.*

ashamed hungry nervous uncomfortable
batty ill sick
crazy mad 6 tired

4 THE 'HAPPY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is happy.

*It was a Sunday, and grandfather said that it made him **glad** to see a shopkeeper who observed the day of rest.*

*It made him **happy** to see Jeff show initiative.*

glad happy

5 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are two other adjectives, *tolerable* and *worse*, which have this pattern, but only in the phrases *make life tolerable* and *make matters worse*.

*It makes life **tolerable** to know that other people feel the same.*

*Did it make matters **worse** to raise the value of hostages by trading arms for hostages?*

tolerable worse

117 *it* v-link ADJ -ing

The adjective group follows introductory *it* and a link verb, and is followed by an '-ing' clause.

<i>it</i>	link verb	Adjective group	-ing clause
It	's not	easy	being a parent.
It	was	ridiculous	putting him behind bars.
It	is	terrifying	being a soldier.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'AWFUL' GROUP
- 2 THE 'NICE' GROUP
- 3 THE 'STRANGE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'DIFFICULT' AND 'DANGEROUS' GROUP
- 5 THE 'EASY' AND 'SAFE' GROUP

1 THE 'AWFUL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the situation indicated by the '-ing' clause is judged to be unpleasant in some way. This includes adjectives with a general meaning, such as *awful*, *horrible*, and *terrible*, and those with a more specific meaning, such as *boring*, *irritating*, and *frightening*.

*It is **awful** finding out that your mother may have been killed in hospital.*

*I never liked aerobics. It was **immensely boring** hopping up-and-down on the spot.*

*People say it must be **frightening** starting a downhill race at the top of a mountain.*

*It was **unbearable** living in that apartment after what had happened.*

awful	dreadful	irritating	terrible
bad	eerie	painful	terrifying
boring	frightening	sad	tough 4
costly	frustrating	scary	unbearable
degrading	hard	stressful	unpleasant
disappointing	horrible	tedious	

2 THE 'NICE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the situation indicated by the '-ing' clause is judged to be pleasant in some way. This includes adjectives with a general meaning, such as *amazing*, *brilliant*, and *nice*, and those with a more specific meaning, such as *exciting* and *funny*.

*It was **brilliant** working with him because he's such a great player and he really enjoyed himself.*

*It was **exciting** watching her grow in confidence.*

*It was **fine** doing the exams early because you knew that if you didn't do as well as you wanted to you could do them again.*

*It is not **nice** missing your child's first steps, her first recital or your husband's important business dinner.*

*It's been **wonderful** having you here, Paul. I mean that.*

amazing	exhilarating	grand	okay
beautiful	fantastic	great	pleasant
brilliant 2	fine	lovely	wonderful
cool 11	funny 1	marvellous	
exciting	good	nice	

3 THE 'STRANGE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the situation indicated by the '-ing' clause is judged to be interesting, unusual, or strange.

*He has theories about this and that and it is **fascinating** listening to him.*

*I thought it was **very interesting** listening to you describing the food shopping.*

*It was **odd** seeing her, though. After all these years.*

*It's **very strange** being on my own in the house.*

different	interesting	strange
fascinating	odd	unusual
funny 2	queer	weird

4 THE 'DIFFICULT' AND 'DANGEROUS' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the action indicated in the '-ing' clause is not recommended because it is, for example, difficult, dangerous, or useless.

*It is **dangerous** driving in Oxford because there are thousands of cyclists without lights.*

*It was **very difficult** getting out of the habit of waking up early.*

*It is **stupid** taking so many pictures on holiday because when you are old, the thing you will really want is to have pictures of everyday life.*

awkward	futile	precarious	stupid
daft	hard	ridiculous	tough 5
dangerous	hopeless	risky	useless
difficult	pointless	senseless	wrong

5 THE 'EASY' AND 'SAFE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that the action indicated in the '-ing' clause is easy, safe, or useful.

Adjectives

'It's not easy getting people to change,' sighed Mr Moore.
 The family decided that crime was getting so bad it wasn't safe living in Minnesota anymore so they decided to move to Iowa.
 It is worthwhile looking out for special deals and discounts.

easy	useful
safe	worthwhile

Worth also has this pattern and meaning. However, it does not behave like an adjective in other ways: for example, you cannot say that an action is worth.

If your problem is serious, it might be worth seeing a doctor.

118 v it ADJ that

The adjective group follows a verb and introductory *it*, and is followed by a **that-clause**. This pattern occurs when a verb which has the pattern **V n adj** is followed by an adjective which has the pattern **it v-link ADJ that**.

	verb group	it	Adjective group	that-clause
I	find	it	amazing	that he can be so cruel.
That	makes	it	unlikely	that the patients were infected elsewhere.

The passive pattern is **it be v-ed ADJ that**.

The verbs that occur most frequently with this pattern are *find* and *make*, although other verbs with similar meanings also occur. (See Collins COBUILD Grammar Patterns 1: Verbs.)

This pattern is productive: all adjectives that have the pattern **it v-link ADJ that** can be used in this way. We list below the adjectives that are most frequently used in this way.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'FAIR' GROUP
- 2 THE 'SAD' GROUP
- 3 THE 'INCREDIBLE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'SURPRISING' GROUP
- 5 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'PROBABLE' GROUP
- 7 THE 'APPARENT' GROUP
- 8 THE 'ILLEGAL' GROUP
- 9 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'FAIR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is good in some way. They are used with verbs such as *think* or *find*.

'I wanted to play in the second half,' he said, 'but the trainer thought it best that I should rest the knee.'

So I wrote to the government asking if they thought it fair that I was in this situation.

Dave was a moralist, and thought it proper that poets should be not only moralists, but also moral beings.

acceptable	effective	gratifying	reassuring
admirable	encouraging	heartening	refreshing
appropriate	exciting	helpful	right
apt	expedient	marvellous	touching
best	fair	proper	useful
charming	fitting	providential	wise
desirable	fortunate	reasonable	

2 THE 'SAD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is bad in some way. They are used with verbs such as *find*.

I find it offensive that I am being accused of giving advice in return for political favours.

He thought it ridiculous that anyone should care about animals so much.

I find it sad that there is so little I can do.

He thought it wrong that when people became unable to look after themselves, they would be uprooted from their community for nursing care far from home.

absurd	galling	outrageous	tragic
appalling	gross	perverse	unacceptable
contemptible	hard	pitiable	undesirable
depressing	horrific	regrettable	unfair
disappointing	immoral	ridiculous	unforgivable
discouraging	inadvisable	sad	unfortunate
disgraceful	inequitable	scandalous	unjust
distasteful	intolerable	shocking	unreasonable
distressing	irritating	sickening	unsatisfactory
disturbing	ludicrous	silly	wrong
dreadful	maddening	sinister	
excessive	offensive	terrible	
frustrating	ominous	tiresome	

3 THE 'INCREDIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is thought to be true or possible, or the opposite. They are used with verbs such as *find*. The adjectives meaning 'not true' in this group are more frequent than the adjectives meaning 'true'.

Some people find it incredible that people like Schumacher can earn so much money while others receive so little.

I still find it unbelievable that the Government has waited 22 months to act on this.

Conceivable, inconceivable, incredible, and plausible are also used with verbs such as *make*.

Yet there is a terrifying aspect to these sophisticated systems. They make it conceivable that, at any given moment, nobody might know who or what is really in control of the plane.

No Fascist has been elected to the United Kingdom Parliament since the Second World War because our electoral system makes it inconceivable that anyone would get the necessary support in any given constituency to be returned.

axiomatic	inconceivable	plausible	unbelievable
conceivable	incredible	true	unimaginable

4 THE 'SURPRISING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is surprising or unusual, or the opposite. They are used with verbs such as *find* or *think*.

*Do you think it **odd** that it took him four weeks to learn to write his name?*

*Did you never think it **strange** that in five years together, we never once hugged?*

*I do find it **surprising** that successful women of the 90s are still worried about their husbands finding out how much money they've been spending.*

Curious is also used with verbs such as *make*.

*Thomson claims to be the world's fourth-largest consumer electronics company, which makes it **curious** that hardly anyone has heard of it.*

amazing	extraordinary	normal	staggering
anomalous	fascinating	noteworthy	strange
astonishing	funny	odd	surprising
astounding	incomprehensible	paradoxical	understandable
baffling	interesting	peculiar	unremarkable
bizarre	intriguing	puzzling	unusual
curious	natural	remarkable	weird

5 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important or necessary. They are used with verbs such as *make*.

*As people grow older, conditions like arthritis make it **important** that the neck is not extended or manipulated beyond limited ranges.*

*We think it's a depressing state of affairs and it makes it **necessary** that the Government acts to do something for Aboriginal people.*

All these adjectives except *compulsory* and *mandatory* are also used with verbs such as *think*. The verb in the *that*-clause is sometimes in the *subjunctive*.

*We thought it **important** that Phil continue to write.*

*I think it **vital** that doctors appreciate the importance of personal, family, and cultural beliefs.*

compulsory	essential	mandatory	vital
critical	imperative	necessary	
crucial	important	significant	

6 THE 'PROBABLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is likely or unlikely to happen. They are used with verbs such as *make*. The adjective *certain* is very frequently used in this way.

*All Mr Ashdown's friends also backed him, making it **certain** that he will face no immediate challenge to his party's leadership.*

*When Tommy Smith, a childhood sweetheart, reappears on leave from the war, Annie falls in love but then discovers a secret about her past which makes it **impossible** that they should ever marry.*

All these adjectives except *certain* and *inevitable* are also used with verbs such as *think*.

*He thought it **probable** that they were taking many more less able students into the school than they used to.*

*She had promised to ring her mother that evening, she remembered, but thought it **unlikely** that she would do so.*

certain	improbable	possible
doubtful	inevitable	probable
impossible	likely	unlikely

7 THE 'APPARENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is obvious. They are used with verbs such as *make*. The adjectives *apparent*, *clear*, and *plain* are very frequently used in this way.

*The intense battles made it **apparent** that the army would not achieve a quick or tidy victory.*

*The example of Cézanne makes it **plain** that you must be workmanlike in what you do.*

apparent	evident	obvious
clear	explicit	plain

8 THE 'ILLEGAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is illegal or official. They are used with verbs such as *make*.

*The court ruled it **illegal** that teams demand a transfer fee for players once their contract has expired.*

*A four-day bash in New York will make it **official** that Bill Clinton will be the party's nominee.*

illegal	public
official	unconstitutional

9 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern. They are used with verbs such as *find*.

*The women found it **amusing** that I would want to go into the kitchen; that a male would be interested in cooking.*

amusing	hilarious	provocative
confusing	ironic	relevant

119 v it as ADJ that

The adjective group follows a verb, introductory *it*, and the preposition *as*, and is followed by a *that*-clause. This pattern occurs when a verb which has the pattern *V n as adj* is followed by an adjective which has the pattern *it v-link ADJ that*.

verb group		adjective group		that-clause
Dealers	see	it	as unlikely	that Kingfisher can keep its independence.

The passive pattern is **it be v-ed as ADJ that**.

The verbs that occur most frequently with this pattern are *accept, claim, describe, hold, recognize, regard, see, take, and view*.

This pattern is productive: many adjectives that have the pattern **it v-link ADJ that** are used in this pattern. We list below the adjectives that are most frequently used in this way.

*Politicians take it as **axiomatic** that nobody votes for higher taxes.*

*I regarded it as **essential** that the talks I was due to have with the President should be a success.*

*It's seen as **ironic** that after having said he was the only person who could hold the country together he is now trying to create a federation.*

*When water was a state industry, we saw it as **normal** that we should be asked to economise in hot weather.*

axiomatic	ironic	unlikely
essential	normal	
inevitable	significant	

120 v it ADJ to-inf

The adjective group follows a verb and introductory *it*, and is followed by a **to-infinitive clause**. This pattern occurs when an adjective with the pattern **it v-link ADJ to-inf** follows a verb with the pattern **V n adj**. We list below the adjectives that most frequently occur in this pattern.

The verbs that are used with this pattern belong to two types: the *believe* type (*believe, consider, deem, feel, find, judge, and think*), and the *make* type (*make and render, where the Subject is an event or situation*).

	verb group	it	Adjective group	to-infinitive clause
They	find	it	annoying	to stand in a queue all day.
I	consider	it	tasteless	to use such material.

The passive pattern is **it be v-ed ADJ to-inf**.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'GOOD' GROUP
- 2 THE 'WRONG' GROUP
- 3 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP
- 4 THE 'WISE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'HYPOCRITICAL' GROUP
- 6 THE 'EASY' AND 'DIFFICULT' GROUP
- 7 THE 'NATURAL' AND 'ODD' GROUP
- 8 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 9 THE 'POSSIBLE' AND 'IMPOSSIBLE' GROUP
- 10 THE 'ILLEGAL' GROUP
- 11 THE 'CHEAP' GROUP

1 THE 'GOOD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be good in some way. They are used with verbs such as *believe*.

*I don't run or jog, and having reached my 60s, I don't feel it **appropriate** to start now.*

*Those with more immediate requirements find it **beneficial** to pursue a longer initial course of study.*

*Robert thought it **best** to change the subject.*

*When the time comes to choose a school for your child, you might find it **helpful** to talk to other parents and visit some schools.*

*Two hundred years ago people thought it **right** to burn witches.*

*As an investigator he had often found it **useful** to pretend to be stupid.*

*We thought it **worthwhile** to make the journey north.*

*Acceptable, okay, and worthwhile are also used with verbs such as *make*.*

*We do, however, have a common goal as patients and doctors that **makes it worthwhile** to stretch toward each other.*

acceptable	desirable	helpful	right
advantageous	fair	legitimate	seemly
appropriate	fashionable	okay	therapeutic
attractive	fine	preferable	useful
beneficial	fitting	profitable	valuable
comfortable	funny	proper	worthwhile
cool	good	relevant	

2 THE 'WRONG' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be bad in some way. They are used with verbs such as *believe*.

*Many Christians felt it **inappropriate** to invite a symbol of darkness into the cathedral.*

*People living or working with smokers, who find it **uncomfortable** to wear contact lenses because the smoke causes irritation, can try using an ionizer to solve the problem.*

*Today some people consider it **unlucky** to bring a newborn baby home from hospital in the back seat of the car.*

*Fruitarians believe it **wrong** to eat the living leaves and roots of vegetables.*

*Inappropriate and pointless are also used with verbs such as *make*.*

*The international nature of its business made it **inappropriate** to make political donations in any one country.*

improper	outrageous	uncomfortable	unseemly
inappropriate	pointless	undesirable	useless
intolerable	sacrilegious	unethical	wrong
irrelevant	shameful	unfair	
obscene	tasteless	unjustifiable	
offensive	unbearable	unlucky	

3 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone has a particular feeling about a situation. They are most frequently used with the verb *find*.

You might find it interesting to inquire about how your children get on when you are not there.

Tempting is also used with verbs such as make.

Documentary-makers only like to do the bits of the story that they can film, which makes it tempting to reconstruct the event or rig it in advance.

amusing	illuminating	refreshing	tempting
annoying	interesting	rewarding	thrilling
confusing	painful	satisfying	
depressing	reassuring	soothing	

4 THE 'WISE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be sensible or not sensible. They are used with verbs such as believe.

Many people, for example, would once have considered it insane to worry about an asteroid colliding with the earth.

The river gave us an exciting ride and at times I judged it prudent to come into the bank.

The survey also reveals that 12 per cent of parents think it reasonable to leave eight to 11-year-olds alone for an hour.

He didn't know when he'd be coming back and thought it wise to leave his keys.

Absurd, advisable, foolish, reasonable, and sensible are also used with verbs such as make.

The software you use for education and work has a much longer shelf life, which makes it sensible to consider spending a little more to get the best available.

absurd	illogical	politic	sensible
advisable	imprudent	premature	smart
clever	insane	prudent	unreasonable
daft	judicious	rash	unwise
expedient	logical	reasonable	wise
foolish	ludicrous	ridiculous	

5 THE 'HYPOCRITICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone is judged to have a good or bad character if they do a particular thing. None of these adjectives is very frequent in this pattern. They are used with verbs such as believe.

As neither of us are religious we consider it hypocritical to undertake a ceremony where we would ask for our marriage to be blessed by a deity we have no belief in.

Michael had confided in Vicky that he meant to keep up with his music, but he considered it unrealistic to count on that as a career.

hypocritical	manly	tactless	witty
immoral	patriotic	unmanly	womanly
impolite	polite	unrealistic	
inhuman	realistic	vulgar	
kind	rude	witless	

6 THE 'EASY' AND 'DIFFICULT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is easy or difficult, safe or dangerous. They are used with verbs such as believe.

When we navigate the ocean, or when we predict an eclipse, we often find it convenient to assume that the earth goes round the sun.

At the first opportunity she dodged into the nearest toilet and remained there until she judged it safe to emerge.

Difficult, easy, and hard occur very frequently with find.

Employers were also concerned that mature students would find it difficult to mix with a younger workforce.

'My legs were very weak and I found it difficult to walk,' he said.

Try drinking your tea or coffee without sugar. You might find it easier to cut down a little at a time.

Carolyn finds it hard to talk about the future and she is just taking each day as it comes.

All these adjectives except convenient and inconvenient are also used with verbs such as make. Difficult, easy, and hard are used particularly frequently.

It is hot and humid here for most of the year and this makes it difficult to spin cotton.

Rooftop satellite dishes make it easier to call New York than to phone a friend across town.

Air travel has been thrown into turmoil because the shortage of foreign currency has made it hard to buy jet fuel.

awkward	easy	safe	unsafe
convenient	hard	simple	
dangerous	inconvenient	tough	
difficult	risky	tricky	

7 THE 'NATURAL' AND 'ODD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be normal or unusual. They are used with verbs such as believe.

I believe this is because children are in the active process of learning new behaviors and find it natural to try something different.

I find it odd to refer to myself as an Asian, although I do so quite regularly these days.

natural	odd	unusual
normal	strange	

8 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be important or necessary, or not. They are used with verbs such as believe.

If a commander thinks it essential to destroy something right away, he will send bombers.

I thought it important to make Michelle feel at home while she was staying with my family.

Why it was thought necessary to chain her in the first place I do not know.

Necessary occurs very frequently with find.

When he had been engaged to Elizabeth he had found it necessary to apologize to her at least once a day.

These adjectives are also used with verbs such as make. Necessary is used particularly frequently.

The lack of dairy products **makes it necessary** to find alternative sources of calcium, such as soya milk, sesame seeds, almonds and some cereals.

compulsory	imperative	necessary
crucial	important	unnecessary
essential	mandatory	vital

9 THE 'POSSIBLE' AND 'IMPOSSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is possible or impossible. They are used with verbs such as *believe*.

*I no longer believe it **possible** to resolve that conflict from within this government.*

Impossible occurs very frequently with *find*.

*I work in a very stressful job and find it **impossible** to work without smoking.*

These adjectives are also used with verbs such as *make*. *Impossible* and *possible* are used particularly frequently.

*The combination of grimy glass and swirling mist **made it impossible** to see anything out of the side windows.*

*This canal will **make it possible** to let the drainage water from the agricultural area bypass the nature reserve.*

feasible	impractical	practical
impossible	possible	
impracticable	practicable	

10 THE 'ILLEGAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is legal or illegal. They are used with verbs such as *make*, and also with the verbs *declare* and *rule*. The Subject of the verb is typically an institution or a law. *Illegal* is used particularly frequently in this pattern.

*The Sex Discrimination Act also **made it illegal** to discriminate on the basis of sex or marital status in areas such as training, promotion and dismissal.*

illegal	legal	unlawful
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11 THE 'CHEAP' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is cheap or expensive. They are used with verbs such as *make*.

*Then, about 100 years ago, things began to change. Coal mines and railroads **made it cheaper** to burn coal than wood and agriculture really took off in the prairies of the Midwest.*

cheap	profitable
expensive	uneconomic

121 v it ADJ for n to-inf

The adjective group follows a verb and introductory *it*, and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *for* and a noun group, and a **to-infinitive clause**. This pattern occurs when an adjective with the pattern **it v-link ADJ for n to-inf** follows a verb with the pattern **V n adj**.

The verbs that are used in this pattern sequence are either like *believe* or like *make*. Verbs of the *believe* type are less frequently used in this pattern. None of the adjectives listed below is particularly frequent with the *believe* verbs, but the lists give an idea of the range of adjectives used. Verbs such as *make* are more frequently used in this pattern and are used with a more restricted set of adjectives.

	verb group	it	Adjective group	for	noun group	to-infinitive clause
The star system	makes	it	easy	for	readers	to check value.
Mike	thought	it	silly	for	me	to wait in the car.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'INAPPROPRIATE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'ODD' GROUP
- 3 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP
- 4 THE 'POSSIBLE' GROUP
- 5 THE 'DIFFICULT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'NECESSARY' GROUP
- 7 THE 'EXPENSIVE' GROUP
- 8 THE 'ILLEGAL' GROUP

1 THE 'INAPPROPRIATE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be bad in some way. They are used with verbs such as *believe*.

*My wife did not go to court – she is suffering from emotional stress as a result of this business and I considered it **inappropriate** for her to attend.*

cruel	inopportune	obscene	wrong
evil	insulting	shameful	
inappropriate	irresponsible	silly	

2 THE 'ODD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be usual or unusual. They are used with verbs such as *believe*.

*You didn't think it **odd** for someone to come on a bike and just abandon it?*

natural	rare
odd	uncharacteristic

3 THE 'RIGHT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is judged to be good in some way. They are used with verbs such as *believe*.

*Mr Borbidge said he considered it **reasonable** for a person to defend his or her home and family through the use of weapons, including firearms.*

Seventy nine per cent of those questioned think it **right** for the police to keep watch on a man with no criminal record.

Acceptable, attractive, safe, and worthwhile are also used with verbs such as *make*.

Special funds have been set aside to **make it attractive** for these farmers to sell out.

acceptable	attractive	reasonable	sensible
advisable	fair	right	wise
appropriate	good	safe	worthwhile

4 THE 'POSSIBLE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is possible or impossible. They are used with verbs such as *make*.

A wave of memories **made it impossible** for me to sleep.

His support and encouragement **made it possible** for me to sustain this project over the four years it took to research and write.

These adjectives are also used with verbs such as *believe*.

Do you think it **impossible** for a woman to love two men?

impossible	possible
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5 THE 'DIFFICULT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is difficult or easy. They are used with verbs such as *make*. The adjectives *difficult* and *easy* are very frequent in this pattern sequence.

We wrecked the runway to **make it difficult** for the enemy to land.

They are struggling to come up with a miracle pill that will **make it easy** for us to lose weight.

difficult	hard	tough
easy	simple	

6 THE 'NECESSARY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is important, necessary, or unnecessary. They are used with verbs such as *make*. The adjective *necessary* is very frequent in this pattern sequence.

Like her father, she was near-sighted, which **made it necessary** for her to wear glasses.

Imperative, important, necessary, and vital are also used with verbs such as *think*.

Over 90 per cent of parents think it **important** for children to play outside.

compulsory	imperative	necessary	unnecessary
essential	mandatory	obligatory	vital

7 THE 'EXPENSIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is financially wise or unwise. They are used with verbs such as *make*.

As a result, they were able to limit their offers of financial aid, **making it more expensive** for many students to attend.

They demanded that the British should leave Malaya and tried to **make it unprofitable** for them to stay.

cheaper	profitable
expensive	unprofitable

8 THE 'ILLEGAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an action is legal or illegal. They are used with verbs such as *make*.

The 1993 Industrial Reformation Act **made it illegal** for any employer to discriminate against an employee because of age.

illegal	legal	unlawful
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122 v it as ADJ to-inf

The adjective group follows a verb, introductory *it*, and the preposition *as*, and is followed by a to-infinitive clause. This pattern occurs when an adjective with the pattern *it v-link ADJ to-inf* follows a verb with the pattern *V n as adj*. We list below the adjectives that most frequently occur in this pattern.

The verbs that are most frequently used in this pattern sequence are *regard*, *see*, and *view*. *Define* and *describe* are also used.

	verb group	it	as	Adjective group	to-infinitive clause
They	would regard	it	as	risky	to test the currency.
He	saw	it	as	useful	to sell books.

A variety of adjectives occur in this pattern, though none is used particularly frequently. They belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'WORTHWHILE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'IMMORAL' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CRITICAL' GROUP
- 4 THE 'ODD' GROUP

1 THE 'WORTHWHILE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a situation is judged to be good in some way.

A majority of those not registered said they were too busy or **did not see it as worthwhile** to get on the voters' roll.

advantageous	legitimate	worthwhile
appropriate	reasonable	
better	useful	

2 THE 'IMMORAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a situation is judged to be bad in some way.

We regard it as **immoral** to judge people on the basis of how they were born.

appalling	fatuous	risky	undignified
contradictory	immoral	shameful	unethical
elitist	inappropriate	suicidal	unhelpful

3 THE 'CRITICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a situation is judged to be important.

*Unless all players in a professional game regard it as **critical** to seize the imagination of the young, then they only have themselves to blame if their game is not as successful as others.*

critical	crucial	necessary
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4 THE 'ODD' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that a situation is judged to be usual or not usual.

*Nobody would regard it as **odd** to read an 'old' novel or listen to an 'old' string quartet.*

natural	odd
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123 it v-link ADJ about n

The adjective group follows *it* and a link verb, and is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *about*.

it	link verb	Adjective group	about	noun group
It	's	so sad	about	her husband.

Most of these adjectives are used to indicate that something that has happened or is happening is very bad, often in rhetorical questions.

*Isn't it **awful** about Mr Pittman? Who would ever guess that that funny little man was a murderer?*

*It's **too bad** about the reviews, but...*

awful	sad
(too) bad	terrible

There is one other adjective, *true*, which has this pattern.

*Is it **true** about all the drugs and that?*

124 there v-link something/anything/nothing ADJ about n/-ing

The adjective group comes after *there*, a link verb (usually *be*), and one of the indefinite pronouns *something*, *anything*, or *nothing*, and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *about* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is productive: the adjectives listed below give an idea of the kind of adjectives that have it.

there	link verb	something/anything/nothing	Adjective group	about	noun group/-ing
There	's	nothing	good	about	being poor.
There	's	something	magnificent	about	show-jumping.
There	was	something	special	about	Nick.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'ATTRACTIVE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'FASCINATING' GROUP
- 3 THE 'UNSATISFACTORY' GROUP
- 4 THE 'DEPRESSING' GROUP
- 5 THE 'FAMILIAR' AND 'DIFFERENT' GROUP
- 6 THE 'ENGLISH' GROUP
- 7 THE 'BOYISH' GROUP
- 8 THE 'POLITICAL' GROUP
- 9 THE 'SECRET' GROUP
- 10 THE 'ADDICTIVE' GROUP
- 11 THE 'AMUSING' GROUP
- 12 THE 'UNREAL' GROUP
- 13 THE 'SACROSANCT' GROUP
- 14 THE 'EASY' GROUP
- 15 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'ATTRACTIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is good in some way.

*There is something **oddly noble** about Charles.*

*I guess I can say **there's nothing pretty** about this movie except for Susan Sarandon.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*There was nothing **heroic** about reading other people's mail and stealing their software.*

*There was something **nice** about having a baby at home, wasn't there?*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is *there v-link something/anything/nothing ADJ about n/-ing*.

*Did you think **there was anything good** about him going, or were you just too lonely?*

*I still think **there's something not quite right** about celebrities writing books.*

admirable	glamorous	magical	noble
attractive	good	magnificent	original
beautiful	healthy	miraculous	pleasant
cosy	heroic	neat	powerful
elegant	innocent	nice	pretty

progressive	right	seductive	sweet
pure	romantic	sexy	wonderful
rational	safe	spectacular	

2 THE 'FASCINATING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something has a quality which causes someone to react positively to them. The person who reacts is not mentioned in the pattern.

*There was something **alluring** about the idea of a great inland sea.*

*There is something **peculiarly exciting** about the arrival of a new company on the Stock Exchange.*

*No one can deny the fact that there is something **fascinating** about these miniature trees, many of them of great age.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*There is something **rather appealing** about being able to spend the evening in a town after a hard day in the great outdoors.*

*'There's something **immensely satisfying** about presiding over a busy evening in your own bar,' says landlord Edward Mitchell.*

alluring	fascinating	poignant	striking
appealing	impressive	reassuring	touching
endearing	interesting	refreshing	
exciting	likeable	satisfying	

3 THE 'UNSATISFACTORY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is bad in some way.

*While it is comforting to think that so many can agree about so much, there is something **dangerous** about such conformity of opinion.*

*There was nothing **malicious** about anything he did.*

*I felt uneasy. There was something **sinister** about him.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*There was something **horrible** about coming home to find everything all over the place.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is *there v-link something/nothing/anything ADJ about n/-ing*.

*When you watch American politics there's something **terminally sad** about middle-aged people waving flags.*

absurd	elitist	ominous	suspicious
artificial	fishy	outrageous	tacky
awful	flashy	pathetic	trivial
bad	furtive	pernicious	unconvincing
bogus	horrible	phoney	underhand
crazy	impersonal	puritanical	unfair
creepy	improper	sad	unpleasant
dangerous	inappropriate	shameful	unsatisfactory
distasteful	malicious	sick	untoward
dubious	manipulative	silly	weak
dull	nasty	sinister	wrong
eerie	obscene	superficial	

4 THE 'DEPRESSING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something has a quality which causes someone to react negatively to them. The person who reacts is not mentioned in the pattern.

*There is something **depressing** about the shorter days of autumn and winter.*

*There was something **profoundly disturbing** about his pale, ghostlike face.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*There is something **very disconcerting** about being stared at through binoculars.*

boring	disconcerting	shocking
depressing	disturbing	uncomfortable

5 THE 'FAMILIAR' AND 'DIFFERENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is normal, or that someone or something is unusual or surprising.

*All available evidence suggests that there is nothing **abnormal** about the way fat people eat.*

*He hurried across to where she stood and as he approached her he noticed there was something **different** about Caroline.*

*There was something **familiar** about his voice.*

*I began to think there must be something **very strange** about the way I was singing.*

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

*Is there anything **special** about being in the medical library as distinct from actually working in the main library?*

abnormal	freakish	outstanding	surprising
average	funny	peculiar	traditional
common	incongruous	predictable	uncanny
curious	inevitable	puzzling	unexpected
different	mysterious	queer	unique
distinctive	mystical	radical	unnatural
dramatic	natural	remarkable	unusual
esoteric	normal	routine	weird
exceptional	obscure	special	
extraordinary	odd	startling	
familiar	ordinary	strange	

6 THE 'ENGLISH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is typical of a place or time, or is like the work, ideas, or behaviour of a famous person. This use is very productive: any adjective which indicates a place or a person can be used in this way. We list below some adjectives of this type, but none of these is at all frequent.

*There's something **very English** about the tradition of watercolour.*

*Mr Hannah insisted there was nothing **Machiavellian** about the control of information from the ship.*

*There is something **unavoidably Shakespearean** about all this.*

Chaplinesque	exotic	Machiavellian	Orwellian
Dickensian	foreign	Olympic	Shakespearean
English	Greek	oriental	Victorian

7 THE 'BOYISH' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something has a quality that is typical of people of a particular age or gender.

There was something boyish about her build and she was handsome in a hard-featured way.

There was nothing consciously feminine about her.

adult	childlike	masculine
boyish	effete	
childish	feminine	

8 THE 'POLITICAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something relates to or is typical of a particular area of human activity.

There was something distinctly military about her posture.

But Judge William Hoewler told the destroyed dictator that there was nothing political about his case. 'This is a simple matter of law and order,' he said.

military	scientific
political	theatrical

9 THE 'SECRET' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone keeps things secret, or that something is hidden or indirect rather than open.

There was nothing secret about these facts. They were available to anyone who wanted to know them.

There is something rather secretive about Lucian at times. He used not to be like that. He was such a frank sort of boy.

anonymous	secret	subtle
covert	secretive	

10 THE 'ADDICTIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that an activity is so interesting or pleasant that people want to watch it or take part in it all the time, or that a person is so attractive that people want to be with them all the time.

Was there not also something addictive about his branch of the banking business?

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There was something almost irresistible about being manly in public.

addictive	compulsive	irresistible
compelling	hypnotic	magnetic

11 THE 'AMUSING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is amusing, in a good or bad way, or ironic.

There is something deliciously ironic about a trendy London audience solemnly listening to a tuneless version of 'Silly Love Songs'.

There was nothing risible about their aims, however.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There was nothing at all amusing about going to the gallows.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is *there v-link something/nothing/anything ADJ about n -ing*.

There's really nothing funny about malaria-bearing mozzies swarming across central Queensland.

amusing	humorous	risible
comic	ironic	
funny	ironical	

12 THE 'UNREAL' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is real or unreal, concrete or abstract.

There is nothing abstract about the spiritual.

There's something altogether unreal about the stretch of the River Thames from Oxford to Maidenhead.

abstract	figurative	supernatural
concrete	imaginary	surreal
fanciful	real	unreal

13 THE 'SACROSANCT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is fixed, definite, or agreed, or not fixed, definite, or agreed.

Students are consumers. There is nothing sacred about educational institutions.

Nor is there anything sacrosanct about the opinions I have quoted or their authors.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by a noun group and an '-ing' clause. This pattern is *there v-link something/nothing/anything ADJ about n -ing*.

There's nothing controversial about two women kissing, is there?

controversial	final	immutable	sacrosanct
equivocal	fundamental	sacred	vague

14 THE 'EASY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is easy or difficult.

There's nothing easy about refugee work.

The preposition *about* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

As all cooks will tell you, there's nothing very difficult about cooking a good steak.

difficult hard
easy simple

15 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other adjectives which have this pattern. Of these, *new* is particularly frequent.

There's nothing new about the idea of fake grass.

ascetic democratic illegal official
casual erotic magic small
chaste fancy new subversive

Other related pattern

v something/nothing/anything ADJ about n

The indefinite pronoun *something*, *nothing*, or *anything* follows a verb such as *find*, *have*, or *notice* and is followed by an adjective and a prepositional phrase beginning with *about*. The adjectives that are found in the pattern shown above are also sometimes found in this variant.

His background is confused, his mood swings are alarming, and he has something childlike about him.

When you get home, you notice something funny about your luggage.

I had always found something odd about the secrecy that the Reichmann brothers wished to preserve.

125 there v-link something/nothing/anything ADJ in n/-ing

The adjective group comes after *there*, a link verb (usually *be*), and one of the indefinite pronouns *something*, *anything*, or *nothing*, and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *in* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause. This pattern is productive: the adjectives listed below give an idea of the kind of adjectives that have it.

there	link verb	something/nothing/anything	Adjective group	in	noun group/-ing
There	was	nothing	illegal	in	his new appointment.
There	is	nothing	new	in	offering customer discounts.
There	's	something	original	in	these pictures.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP
- 2 THE 'WRONG' GROUP
- 3 THE 'EXTRAORDINARY' GROUP
- 4 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is good in some way.

If there is anything interesting in my life, I'm certainly not going to talk about it on camera.

I'm sorry now that I spent so much time thinking there might be something positive in that woefully dark world back there.

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

I would definitely recommend shooting. There is something really satisfying in being able to do it properly.

good original remarkable true
interesting positive satisfying virtuous

2 THE 'WRONG' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone or something is bad in some way.

I would argue that there is nothing evil in Wagner's music.

The preposition *in* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There is nothing shameful in not wanting a career.

There is nothing wrong in setting high standards for ourselves but these shouldn't be unrealistic.

amiss illegal irregular sinister
bad illogical malicious untoward
dodgy improper nasty wrong
evil inappropriate shameful

3 THE 'EXTRAORDINARY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is unusual or surprising.

There was something extraordinary in the affection with which the people of New Jersey seemed to esteem Barbara Vaug Sigmund.

There was nothing unusual in her appearance or manner.

different special uncanny
extraordinary strange unnatural
odd surprising unusual

4 ADJECTIVES WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a few other adjectives which have this pattern.

There is nothing particularly new in what he has to say, but it's the way he says it that is so powerful.

Neither is there anything remotely political in the question that lies at the heart of my pamphlet – what can be done to improve the quality of teaching in our schools?

new political serious

Other related pattern

v something/nothing/anything ADJ in n

The indefinite pronoun *something*, *nothing*, or *anything* follows a verb such as *find*, *have*, or *notice* and is followed by an adjective and a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*. The adjectives that are found in the pattern shown above are also sometimes found in this variant.

The ability to see something good in adversity is perhaps the central trait needed by patients.

They can find something interesting in any project and make much out of little.

126 there v-link something/nothing/anything ADJ with n/-ing

The adjective group comes after *there*, a link verb (usually *be*), and one of the indefinite pronouns *something*, *anything*, or *nothing*, and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *with* and a noun group. With some adjectives, the preposition is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

there	link verb	something/nothing/anything	Adjective group	with	noun group/-ing
There	's	something	wrong	with	my phone.

There are only two adjectives which have this pattern. They indicate that something is bad in some way.

There is nothing amiss with a little gentle exuberance to celebrate a moment of sporting glory.

The preposition *with* is sometimes followed by an '-ing' clause.

There is nothing wrong with borrowing to buy a house as long as the amount borrowed is affordable and the house is a good buy.

amiss wrong

Other related patterns

v something/nothing/anything ADJ with n

The indefinite pronoun *something*, *nothing*, or *anything* follows a verb such as *find*, *have*, or *notice* and is followed by an adjective and a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*. Only the adjective *wrong* is frequently used with this pattern.

If the vet finds something wrong with the horse, such as a weak heart or a respiratory problem, he will tell you.

If she has something wrong with her, I don't want to know about it.

The train's engineer reported seeing something wrong with the track and tried desperately to bring the train to a halt.

something v-link ADJ with n

The adjective group follows the indefinite pronoun *something* and a link verb and is followed by a prepositional phrase which consists of *with* and a noun group.

I'm quite sure something's wrong with your car or with you.

amiss wrong

127 Adjective patterns with *what*

In this section we describe adjective patterns which begin with *what*. These patterns are examples of pseudo-cleft sentences.

We include in this section patterns which include a *finite* or *non-finite* clause, such as *what v-link ADJ v-link that* (e.g. *What is interesting is that they went unnoticed*) and patterns which include a prepositional phrase, such as *what v-link ADJ about n v-link n* (e.g. *What is interesting about this book is its explanation of techniques*).

The patterns in this section are:

Pattern 1: *what v-link ADJ v-link that*

Pattern 2: *what v-link ADJ v-link wh*

Pattern 3: *what v-link ADJ v-link -ing*

Pattern 4: *what v-link ADJ to-inf v-link that/wh*

Pattern 5: *what v-link ADJ to n v-link that/wh*

Pattern 6: *what v-link ADJ about n v-link n/that/wh*

Pattern 7: *what v-link ADJ in n v-link that/wh*

Pattern 8: *what v-link ADJ with n v-link that/wh*

Pattern 1: *what v-link ADJ v-link that*

The adjective group is followed by a link verb and a *that*-clause.

what	link verb	Adjective group	link verb	that-clause
What	is	evident	is	that she has powerful friends.
What	was	strange	was	that he had never tried it before.
What	is	vital	is	that you understand the depth of my feelings.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1.1 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP
- 1.2 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 1.3 THE 'EXTRAORDINARY' GROUP
- 1.4 THE 'SHOCKING' GROUP

1.1 THE 'CERTAIN' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is certain or obvious.

What is certain is that birds are often excellent navigators.

What is obvious is that image does matter.

apparent	evident	obvious	true
certain	indisputable	plain	undeniable
clear	likely	sure	undisputed

1.2 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important or necessary.

What is important is that the weekly staff meeting is a democratic forum for discussion.

What is necessary now is that sufficient funds are made available to support research throughout Wales.

crucial	important	significant
essential	necessary	vital

1.3 THE 'EXTRAORDINARY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is surprising or out of the ordinary.

What is extraordinary is that four men of decidedly different opinions agreed with this statement.

What is surprising is that few scientists stop to reflect on what they are doing.

amazing	extraordinary	odd	surprising
astonishing	fascinating	remarkable	unique
curious	interesting	strange	unusual
different	new	striking	

1.4 THE 'SHOCKING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone judges a situation in a particular way.

What is shocking is that most of these deaths need not have happened.

What was happening? Nobody appeared to know; what was worse was that nobody seemed curious.

impressive	sad	worse
ironic	shocking	wrong

Pattern 2: what v-link ADJ v-link wh

The adjective group is followed by a link verb and a **wh**-clause.

Adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

- 2.1 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP
- 2.2 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP
- 2.3 THE 'UNCLEAR' GROUP

2.1 THE 'INTERESTING' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is interesting or surprising. The **wh**-clause usually begins with **how**.

What is interesting is how enthusiastically Haig was fulfilling his role.

What's even more puzzling is why dinosaurs lasted as long as they did and how they managed to colonize such widely different parts of the world.

What is just as remarkable is how often we set our brains to work in a very limiting or blinkered way.

interesting	remarkable	surprising
puzzling	striking	

2.2 THE 'IMPORTANT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is important or relevant.

What's important is whether you make or lose money.

important	relevant
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2.3 THE 'UNCLEAR' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something is unclear or unknown.

What is unclear is whether he will be able to continue against players far richer than him.

unclear	unknown
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Pattern 3: what v-link ADJ v-link -ing

The adjective group is followed by a link verb and an '-ing' clause.

What happened was simple. What is difficult is sorting it out in my mind.

difficult	important
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Pattern 4: what v-link ADJ to-inf v-link that/wh

The adjective group is followed by a to-infinitive clause.

Adjectives with this pattern indicate that something is difficult, important, or likely.

What is difficult to understand is why the army took such casualties.

In the case of **important**, the verb in the to-infinitive clause is often **remember** or **note**.

What's important to remember is that this information was never used alone.

In the case of **likely**, the verb in the to-infinitive is often **happen**.

What is likely to happen is that part-timers will be drafted in.

difficult	important
hard	likely

Pattern 5: what v-link ADJ to n v-link that/wh

The adjective group is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *to*. Adjectives with this pattern indicate that something is important or interesting. The noun group following *to* indicates who thinks it is important or interesting.

*What was **interesting** to me is that they are not drawing such a strict age line as I thought they might.*

amazing important
fascinating interesting

Pattern 6: what v-link ADJ about n v-link n/that/wh

The adjective group is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *about*. The link verb is followed by a noun group, a *that*-clause, or a *wh*-clause.

What	is	interesting	about	this village	is	that it is in Germany.
What	is	notable	about	the show	is	its humour.

This pattern is productive: a range of adjectives that mean 'unusual', 'good', or, less frequently, 'bad', sometimes occur with this pattern. We list below the most frequent.

The adjectives with this pattern belong to the following meaning groups:

6.1 THE 'DIFFERENT' GROUP

6.2 THE 'IMPRESSIVE' GROUP

6.1 THE 'DIFFERENT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that something or someone is strange, unusual, or surprising.

*What's **different** about genetic engineering is that we are able to move genes from one species to another, from animal to animal, or from an animal to a plant.*

*What is **remarkable** about the education system in the last years of the 20th century is not how much it has changed, but how little.*

*What is **most surprising** about the parsonage itself is its size.*

*What's **unique** about Head Start is that in addition to early child education for preschoolers, we provide health care for the children, nutritional services, social services to the family.*

amazing extraordinary notable striking
bizarre fascinating odd surprising
curious funny remarkable unique
different interesting special unusual
distinctive new strange

6.2 THE 'IMPRESSIVE' GROUP

These adjectives indicate that someone thinks that something is good or important, or, less frequently, bad.

*What is **so disturbing** about the legal process is that it's so clinical.*

*Everyone agrees that what is **most important** about the plan is the fact that the allies now agree on something.*

*What was **impressive** about her was that she was unwilling to talk about her talent unless pressed.*

admirable good impressive worrying
attractive great significant
disturbing important wonderful

Pattern 7: what v-link ADJ in n v-link n/that/wh

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*.

*What is **important** in this situation is that the child does not become the family scapegoat, responsible for all problems.*

*What was **striking** in these photographs were the changing expressions on the faces of the high party officials.*

important new striking

Pattern 8: what v-link ADJ with n v-link n/that/wh

The adjective is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *with*. There is one adjective, *wrong*, which has this pattern.

*What is **wrong** with this book is that it is just one side of the story.*

128 Combining forms

Combining forms combine with other words to form compound words, usually written with a hyphen. Most combining forms are used to make adjectives. These words are labelled **COMB in ADJ** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary. The adjective formed may be graded or ungraded. In the lists below we indicate the combining forms which make adjectives which are graded.

We also include in this section adjectives which typically combine with adverbs and which are labelled **adv ADJ** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary. Adjectives that are formed in this way are graded or ungraded, depending on whether the adverb is graded or ungraded. In the lists below we indicate the adjectives that are always used with graded adverbs.

We deal below with two types of combining form:

- 1 Combining forms which follow other words
- 2 Combining forms which precede other words

1 Combining forms which follow other words

The combining form comes after another word. These combining forms belong to the following meaning groups:

- 1.1 THE '-COVERED' GROUP
- 1.2 THE '-DRESSED' GROUP
- 1.3 THE '-EQUIPPED' GROUP

- 1.4 THE '-INFESTED' GROUP
- 1.5 THE '-FREE' GROUP
- 1.6 THE '-ROOFED' GROUP
- 1.7 THE '-PRONGED' GROUP
- 1.8 THE '-HAIRD' GROUP
- 1.9 THE '-LOOKING' GROUP
- 1.10 THE '-SHAPED' GROUP
- 1.11 THE '-FLAVOURED' GROUP
- 1.12 THE '-SCARRED' GROUP
- 1.13 THE '-BEHAVED' GROUP
- 1.14 THE '-CHALLENGED' GROUP
- 1.15 THE '-HUNGRY' GROUP
- 1.16 THE '-BEARING' GROUP
- 1.17 THE '-EDUCATED' GROUP
- 1.18 THE '-LOCATED' GROUP
- 1.19 THE '-GOING' GROUP
- 1.20 THE '-CONTROLLED' GROUP
- 1.21 THE '-CENTRED' GROUP
- 1.22 THE '-POWERED' GROUP
- 1.23 THE '-HIGH' GROUP
- 1.24 THE '-INDUCED' GROUP
- 1.25 THE '-RESPECTED' GROUP
- 1.26 THE '-TITLED' GROUP
- 1.27 COMBINING FORMS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

1.1 THE '-COVERED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. -coated ◊3 also combines with adverbs. The adjectives formed indicate that something is covered with something, or decorated with something.

Add plain popcorn and shake until popcorn is evenly **coated**.

The winter landscape of **snow-covered** mountains and hills contrasts with the dark green of the forests.

As he talks, he paces round the table in his **book-lined** conference room like a character in a bad courtroom drama.

Television reports showed fighters darting through **rubble-strewn** streets between charred tanks and corpses half buried in snow.

He flicked dust from his **fur-trimmed** gown and grinned maliciously at Kathryn.

-banded	-covered ◊3	-plated	-topped ◊14
-bedecked	-crusted	-spattered	-trimmed
-bound ◊4	-edged	-stained	-veined 2
-caked	-flecked	-streaked	
-clad 2	-lined ◊32, ◊33	-strewn	
-coated 2, ◊3	-panelled	-studded	

1.2 THE '-DRESSED' GROUP

All these combining forms except *clad* combine with adverbs. -clad, -coated, -garbed, and -robed combine with nouns or colour words. The adjectives formed describe someone's clothes or appearance.

Their neighbours were a pair of genteel and exquisitely **dressed** elderly ladies.

I wanted something special, a way of looking original in the ocean of **black-garbed** women.

He is extremely smart, always **beautifully turned out**, and I've no dress sense at all.

-arrayed	-clothed	-dressed	-manicured
-attired	-coated 1	-garbed	-robed
-bedecked	-coiffed	-groomed	-shod
-clad 1	-coiffured	-made-up	-turned out

1.3 THE '-EQUIPPED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with adverbs. The adjectives formed indicate how much of something someone or something has, especially whether they have an adequate amount.

Most of the rooms are suites with **fully-equipped** kitchens, and all are decorated quite differently.

The train was travelling north from Cairo through the **densely populated** Delta.

We must make sure that we argue for **adequately resourced** facilities.

-appointed (graded)	-populated (graded)	-vegetated (graded)
-equipped (graded)	-resourced (graded)	
-furnished (graded)	-staffed (graded)	

1.4 THE '-INFESTED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate that a thing or person has a lot of something, physically or metaphorically. This may be a good thing or a bad thing.

You can buy **calcium-enriched** milks at supermarkets or from your milkman.

The men floated in **shark-infested** waters all alone for five days before a Navy plane spotted the survivors.

It's not surprising you feel **guilt-ridden** about trying to solve personal problems while watching your children suffer.

They say it is better to drive past a **rain-sodden** woman standing by the roadside than pick her up.

-drenched	-filled	-rich (graded)	-soaked
-encrusted	-infested	-ridden (graded)	-sodden
-enriched	-laden (graded)	-riddled	

1.5 THE '-FREE' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate that something does not have something or is not affected by it.

The bulbs will need to be stored in a **frost-free** place for the winter.

Every item of equipment was suspended by an **insect-proof** cord above ground level.

-deficient (graded)	-free	-proof
-exempt	-low (graded)	-resistant (graded)

1.6 THE '-ROOFED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with adjectives and nouns. The adjectives formed indicate what part of something, for example a building, vehicle, or container, is made of or is like.

Adjectives

The fruit is simply steeped in sugar and spirit in a **wide-mouthed** jar.
 He wore **plastic** or **wire-rimmed** spectacles.
 A **flat-roofed** house is not ideally suited to the British climate.

-bottomed	-hulled ◇1	-roofed	-tipped
-centred	-leaved	-sided	-topped ◇14
-edged	-mouthed ◇3	-stemmed	-walled
-floored	-rimmed	-tiled	-winged ◇2

1.7 THE '-PRONGED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with numbers and with adjectives such as *double*. The adjectives formed indicate the size or quality of something, or how many parts of a particular kind a thing, person, or animal has.

They settled down in a **one-bedroomed** flat in Thames Ditton.
 He armed himself with a wooden club and a **double-barrelled** shotgun and pursued his wife to her secret home in London.
 He promised a **four-pronged** attack on the causes of crime.
 There is a trend towards character boats such as the ever popular Cornish Shrimper with their traditional **four-sided** sails.
 Nine people were rescued from the rubble of the **five-storey** building, which collapsed on Thursday evening.
 In the later 80s, Ivana toured Britain with her own **two-woman** play about Sylvia Plath.

-armed 1	-decker	-person	-storey
-barrelled	-engined	-piece	-storeyed
-bedded	-figure	-ply	-tier 1,2
-bedroomed	-headed	-pronged	-tog
-bore	-legged ◇1, ◇4	-roomed	-way 23
-carat	-lobed ◇2	-sided	-woman
-day	-man	-speed	

1.8 THE '-HAired' GROUP

These combining forms combine with adjectives or, sometimes, colour words. The adjectives formed are used to describe a person, animal, or piece of clothing by indicating what one part is like.

A flock of **black-billed** cranes strut around the grass hoping to catch a tidbit from diners at the restaurant.
 Brightly dressed in new, crisp clothes, **rosy-cheeked** and apparently friendly, they sit down to their juice and biscuits.
 Suddenly the door burst open and a large, **red-faced** man in a **short-sleeved** shirt and Bermudas stepped in.
 A **dark-haired** young woman with an English rose complexion came towards us.

-armed 1 (graded)	-cheeked (graded)	-legged ◇1 (graded)	-sleeved
-bellied	-chested (graded)	-legged ◇4	-soled
-billed	-eyed	-limbed (graded)	-tailed
-boned (graded)	-faced (graded)	-lipped (graded)	-trousered
-bottomed	-footed (graded)	-mouthed ◇1 (graded)	-veined 1
-breasted ◇1, ◇4	-haired (graded)	-shirted	-waisted ◇1, ◇2 (graded)
-brimmed (graded)	-hipped (graded)	-skinned (graded)	-winged ◇1

1.9 THE '-LOOKING' GROUP

These combining forms combine with adjectives. The adjectives formed indicate that someone or something looks, smells, sounds, or tastes good or bad.

He's so **good-looking**, women stare at him in the street.

-looking (graded)	-sounding (graded)
-smelling (graded)	-tasting

1.10 THE '-SHAPED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with a range of other words:

- with adverbs: **-built**, **-charged**, **-defined**, **-finished**, **-fitting**, **-made**, **-nourished**, **-proportioned**
- with adjectives: **-calorie**, **-grained**, **-toned**
- with nouns: **-hugging**, **-soluble**
- with adverbs and adjectives: **-knit**, **-textured**
- with adverbs and nouns: **-shaped**
- with nouns and adjectives: **-grade**

The adjectives formed indicate a range of physical qualities or properties.

He is tall and **powerfully built** and goes by the nickname Tex.
 Electrons, being **negatively charged**, usually orbit as close as possible to the positively charged nucleus.
 When your subject is lit by a hard light, he or she will cast a **sharply-defined** shadow on a nearby wall.
 They made their reputation on intricate, **beautifully finished** tailoring.
 The house was **crescent-shaped**, only one room deep with a large sunroom at the back.
 The doors opened, and the assistant doorman stepped forward carrying a long, **oddly-shaped** parcel in white paper wrapping.
 It is **water soluble**, so you can rinse it off or remove with a dampened sponge or cotton wool.

-built ◇1,2 (graded)	-fitting (graded)	-made (graded)	-textured (graded)
-calorie (graded)	-grade 2	-nourished (graded)	-toned (graded)
-charged 2	-grained ◇3, ◇5 (graded)	-proportioned (graded)	
-defined (graded)	-hugging	-shaped	
-finished 4 (graded)	-knit 1	-soluble	

1.11 THE '-FLAVOURED' GROUP

All these combining forms except *spiced* combine with nouns. *-spiced* combines with adverbs, and *-flavoured* combines with adverbs and adjectives. The adjectives formed indicate that something contains a particular element, physically or metaphorically.

Cinnamon-flavoured biscuits are a real treat in a lunch box or on the tray for morning or afternoon tea.
 Don't in any circumstances eat **highly spiced** foods or acids such as vinegar.
 Iris' **gospel-tinged** songs resonate with a poignancy and feeling for the land as only country music can.

-flavoured	-inflected	-tinged
-impregnated	-spiced (graded)	-tinted

1.12 THE '-SCARRED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate that someone or something has been or is being badly affected by something.

*The square itself, epicentre of the 1989 revolution, was a parade of **bullet-scarred**, burnt-out buildings.*

*Most of the refugees now arriving in Britain come from **strife-torn** countries in the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East.*

-crazed	-scarred 1	-stricken (graded)
-damaged	-scarred 2 (graded)	-torn ◇ 2.8

1.13 THE '-BEHAVED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with a range of other words:

- with adverbs: **-behaved**, **-educated**, **-minded 2**, **-sexed**
- with nouns: **-brained**, **-like**, **-minded 3**
- with adjectives: **-footed**, **-hearted**, **-mannered**, **-minded 1**, **-mouthed**, **-spirited**
- with nouns and adverbs: **-conscious**
- with adverbs and adjectives: **-spoken**

The adjectives formed indicate something about a person's character, mind, or behaviour.

*These boys were very happy, pleasant, **well-behaved** children.*

*The bison is the ideal meat animal for the **health-conscious** and **conservation-minded** carnivorous consumer.*

*Sampras will be title favourite if he can regenerate his wearied mind and body to overcome **nimble-footed** Michael Chang today.*

*I feel my loyalty is to this lad that I've known since I've got here. Because he is very **good-hearted**.*

*An 'obnoxious and **loud-mouthed**' train passenger who bit off a fellow commuter's ear after he was told to stop smoking was jailed for three years yesterday.*

-behaved (graded)	-hearted (graded)	-sexed (graded)
-brained (graded)	-like (graded)	-spirited (graded)
-conscious (graded)	-mannered ◇ 3 (graded)	-spoken (graded)
-educated 2 (graded)	-minded 1,2,3 (graded)	
-footed	-mouthed ◇ 2 (graded)	

1.14 THE '-CHALLENGED' GROUP

Most of these combining forms combine with adverbs. **-impaired** combines with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate that someone has a particular ability or disability.

*£2,119,000 is being spent on facilities for people who are **physically challenged** including wheelchair hire and accessible toilets.*

*For deaf and **hearing-impaired** viewers, the frustration is even greater.*

*There will always be children who are not **academically inclined** and there should be some way of measuring their ability.*

*It is crucial for the nation that we have a **scientifically literate** population.*

-challenged	-illiterate 2	-inclined 3
-handicapped	-impaired	-literate 3

1.15 THE '-HUNGRY' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate that someone likes or wants something very much, or to an excessive degree.

*In the Amazon new roads reach into the jungle. Following the roads come **land-hungry** settlers and cattle barons.*

*Thunderbirds' biggest following is in **sci-fi-mad** Japan, where it is said to have had a huge influence on the country's rising band of animators.*

-crazy 3	-hungry 3	-obsessed
-fixated (graded)	-mad 4 (graded)	

1.16 THE '-BEARING' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. **-armed** also combines with adjectives and adverbs. The adjectives formed indicate that a person or group carries or uses something.

*How can conflict be waged between **nuclear-armed** adversaries without leading to mutual destruction?*

*Because he was a trained, **sword-bearing** warrior, he was quite strong, but he was taken by surprise, so there was no help for him.*

-armed 2	-toting
-bearing ◇ 1.2	-waving

1.17 THE '-EDUCATED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns and place names. The adjectives formed indicate where someone is based, was born, or was educated, or where something was made.

*His three sons, Vincent, the **Harvard-educated** author of several history books, Patrick and Andrew, received about £24,000 between them.*

-based	-educated 1	-trained
-born	-made	

1.18 THE '-LOCATED' GROUP

Most of these combining forms combine with adverbs. **-mounted** and **-wide** combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate that something is in a particular kind of place or position.

*Stop overnight on a campsite if you wish or break the journey at one of our conveniently **located** hotels as shown on the map.*

*Unlike most other forests, however, this one has **widely spaced** trees.*

*We're making a desperate **country-wide** appeal for people to come forward.*

-based (graded)	-located (graded)	-placed 2 (graded)	-spaced (graded)
-distributed (graded)	-mounted ◇ 7	-situated (graded)	-wide

1.19 THE '-GOING' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns and place names. The adjectives formed indicate where or how someone or something goes or is travelling.

After losing another hour as he waited to change money, he boarded a packed **London-bound** shuttle train.

We choose to see the natural wonders of the Galapagos Islands, using a small motor yacht rather than a luxury **ocean-going** cruise ship.

-borne **-bound** 1,5 **-going** 1,2,3

1.20 THE '-CONTROLLED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate that something is controlled, owned, or financed by a particular group.

Members of ethnic groups from the south of the country have been tortured and killed by the armed forces and **government-backed** militias.

No UN forces were involved, but a stray shell damaged a roof at the **UN-controlled** airport.

Several hundred students have staged a political protest on the anniversary of last year's **student-led** protest movement.

-affiliated **-commissioned** **-held** **-owned**
-aided **-controlled** 4 **-led** 1 **-sponsored**
-backed **-funded** **-organized**

1.21 THE '-CENTRED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with a range of other words:

- with nouns: **-based** 2, **-centred**
- with adverbs: **-based** 3
- with nouns and adverbs: **-orientated**, **-oriented**

The adjectives formed indicate the central focus or interest of someone or something.

Whatever their significance, scientific theories are absolutely fundamental to Western **science-based** culture and civilisation.

He joined a **child-centred** community where there were equal rights between adults and children.

So how should the privatised utilities and other more **commercially orientated** institutions set about preserving a sense of civic duty?

-based 2 **-centred** 9 (graded) **-oriented** (graded)
-based 3 (graded) **-orientated** (graded)

1.22 THE '-POWERED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate how something is powered or driven. We include here **consuming** and **guzzling**, which indicate that something uses a lot of something such as fuel.

More people should use means of transportation other than **gas-guzzling** cars.

Italy is the largest user of **gas-powered** vehicles with 300,000 cars running on gas imported from North Africa.

-consuming 2 **-fired** **-propelled**
-controlled 5 **-guzzling** 2
-driven 5 **-powered**

1.23 THE '-HIGH' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns or with noun groups that indicate an amount. **-size** 2 and **-sized** 2 also combine with adjectives. The adjectives formed indicate size, duration, or age.

Other guards were held at bay as the six scaled the **30ft-high** wall.

They were all very clean and tidy, especially the girls in their neat **knee-length** flared skirts and short-sleeved blouses.

The **26-year-old** left-hander was thrilled with the result of experimenting with a new racket.

Franck Portillo yesterday smashed his way to a karate world record when he broke a wall of 40 **5cm-thick** sheets of concrete with his elbow.

-deep **-long** 1,3,2,4 **-sized** 1,2,3 **-thick**
-high **-old** **-square** 5 **-wide**
-length **-size** 1,2,3 **-tall**

1.24 THE '-INDUCED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with nouns. The adjectives formed indicate what causes something.

Research has shown that some aspects of **sun-induced** ageing are different from those in a naturally aged skin.

-induced **-inspired** 3 **-led** 2 (graded)

1.25 THE '-RESPECTED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with adverbs. The adjectives formed indicate that someone or something is familiar to and accepted by a lot of people.

In spite of new housing, Cliffe remains an **instantly recognizable** Kent village.

This **widely respected** actor has appeared in Miller plays throughout his career.

-accepted (graded) **-recognizable**
-known (graded) **-respected** (graded)

1.26 THE '-TITLED' GROUP

These combining forms combine with adverbs. The adjectives formed describe the words used for something.

You should at least insist on some fairly **clearly defined** rules.

The first of his albums to become available here, the **aptly titled** 'Drunk', was released in Britain early last year.

-defined 1 (graded) **-titled** (graded) **-worded** (graded)

1.27 COMBINING FORMS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other words that combine to form adjectives. They combine with a

Adjectives

range of other words:

- with nouns: -based 2, -bearing, -blooming, -bound, -friendly, -intensive, -prone, -related, -saving, -shaded, -shy, -speaking, -specific, -unfriendly, -worthy
- with adjectives: -budget, -edged, -ranked, -ranking
- with adverbs: -disposed, -loved, -matched, -off, -paced, -paid, -placed, -schooled, -sound, -strapped, -suited, -unsound
- with ordinals: -generation
- with numbers: -something
- with nouns and adverbs: -populated, -style
- with adverbs and adjectives: -knit

-matched and -suited 2 are reciprocal adjectives.

She recommends an **oil-based** cleanser, a slightly textured cloth and lots of warm water on a daily basis.

A steel house can be built with no internal **load-bearing** walls at all.

InterCity trains have wide doors, handy grabrails, and provision for most **wheelchair-bound** passengers to travel within the passenger saloons.

Before I produced *Shallow Grave* I worked on several **low-budget** films as part of the production crew.

In keeping with a **family-friendly** philosophy, the Peggs allot one field away from the hubbub for those with children.

The family was never **well off**. They were always on what Jones calls 'struggle street'.

'Bones' is a **fast-paced** thriller set in Australia.

He was slow when dressing himself, uncoordinated when he tried to ride a bicycle, clumsy with his hands, and **accident prone**.

Among my mother's many other admirers was a **high-ranking** German diplomat.

A crackdown on **drug-related** crime by Sussex police resulted in 51 arrests and the seizure of a sizeable amount of cocaine.

They are also very much aware that, beneath the increasing tolerance, there still lurk **deeply-rooted** prejudice and fears.

Andrew Mackenzie is like thousands of other **twenty-something** men: for years he has had the travel bug, but his dilemma has always been how to fund a few months abroad.

If the accountant says the company is **financially sound** and strong while in fact it is about to go bankrupt, the lender and investors will of course lose their money.

Two years on, Brian and Audrey are still very much together. A friend said: 'They are extremely **well-suited**.'

-schooled is followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with in.

He's probably **well schooled** in survival.

-disposed and -suited are followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with to. -disposed is sometimes followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with towards.

He had a good knowledge of the youth movement and was **well disposed** to it.

The effect was to channel aid through an institution that was not **well suited** to administering it.

-placed is followed by a to-infinitive clause.

They are now **well placed** to take advantage of business opportunities.

-based 2 -blooming ◇3 -budget (graded)
-bearing ◇1.1, ◇1.3, ◇1.10, ◇1.11 -bound 1,2,3 -disposed (graded)

-edged (graded) -placed 1 (graded) -something 1
-friendly (graded) -populated ◇1 -sound 2,1
-generation 4 -prone (graded) -speaking
-intensive (graded) -ranked -specific ▷3 (graded)
-knit 2 (graded) -ranking -strapped
-loved (graded) -related -style 1
-matched (graded) -saving ◇1, ◇3 -suited 1,2 (graded)
-off 18 (graded) -schooled (graded) -unfriendly (graded)
-paced (graded) -shaded -unsound 3
-paid (graded) -shy -worthy (graded)

2 Combining forms which precede other words

The combining form comes before another word. These combining forms belong to the following meaning groups:

- 2.1 THE 'EVER-' GROUP
- 2.2 THE 'QUICK-' GROUP
- 2.3 THE 'ILL-' GROUP
- 2.4 THE 'FRESH-' GROUP
- 2.5 COMBINING FORMS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

2.1 THE 'EVER-' GROUP

-much and -oft combine with past participles. -ever combines with present participles and adjectives. The adjectives formed indicate that something happens a lot of the time.

On the hills around him, the rebels, scores of whose fires could be seen burning at night, were gathering in **ever-increasing** strength.

The lack of entertainment for the young is another **oft-quoted** problem.

ever- much- oft-

2.2 THE 'QUICK-' GROUP

These combining forms combine with present participles. The adjectives formed indicate that someone or something does something quickly or slowly.

One fairly **quick-growing** shrub for good all-year-round interest is *Euonymus alatus*.

fast- (graded) quick- (graded) slow- (graded)

2.3 THE 'ILL-' GROUP

These combining forms combine with past participles and adjectives. The adjectives formed indicate that someone or something is good or bad in some way.

They were commanded by **inexperienced** and **ill-prepared** officers.

badly- (graded) ill- (graded) well- (graded)

2.4 THE 'FRESH-' GROUP

These combining forms combine with past participles. The adjectives formed indicate that something has recently been done.

The coffin stood on the hill beside the **fresh-dug** grave.

fresh- new- newly-

2.5 COMBINING FORMS WITH OTHER MEANINGS

There are a number of other words that combine to form adjectives. They combine with a range of other words:

- with nouns: *after-*, *all-* 1, 3, *single-*
- with past participles: *hand-*, *ready-*
- with present participles: *all-* 2, *self-* 2
- with participles and adjectives: *self-* 1

It was the most successful *after-dinner* speech I ever heard.

Paul Newman and Orson Welles lead an *all-star* cast in the classic 1958 melodrama *The Long Hot Summer*.

Restored to its original 1928 grandeur, it is a palace of marble, brass, mahogany and *hand-crafted* antique furniture.

Mycoprotein can easily be mistaken for chicken and it is most commonly found in *low-calorie ready-made* meals.

Who would control security in the *self-governing* areas?

after- all- 1, 3
all- 2 (graded) *hand-* ready- 9
self- 1, 2 *single-*

Other related patterns

ADJ and adj

The adjective combines with *and* and another adjective to form a single adjective group.

It'll keep you *nice and warm*.

good lovely nice 6

ADJ adj

The adjective combines with another adjective to form a single adjective group.

There's always a *good hot* meal like steak and kidney pudding.

good lovely nice 6

Phrases

There are a number of phrases in which two words combine to form an adjective.

Cynthia screamed as if *boiling hot* water was being thrown over her.

bitter cold great big scalding hot white-hot
boiling hot icy cold scorching hot
freezing cold red-hot sweltering hot

129 Colour words

Colour words are sometimes adjectives and sometimes nouns. These words are labelled **COLOUR** in the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary.

Adjective uses

When they are adjectives, colour words have the following patterns. Note that the more frequent colour words have **comparative** and **superlative** forms, such as *bluer* and *bluest*.

COLOUR n

The colour word comes before a noun.

He had the *bluest* eyes I had ever seen.

A man in a *brown* raincoat came in.

v-link COLOUR

The colour word follows a link verb.

Her hair was *brown*.

The Marshal's face was *getting redder* than ever.

v COLOUR

The colour word comes after a verb that is not a link verb.

She suddenly *blushed scarlet*.

v n COLOUR

The colour word comes after a verb group and a noun group.

The shock *turned her hair white* overnight.

Noun uses

When they are nouns, colour words are typically used in the singular with no determiner.

The 60-year-old actress, dressed in *black*, told of her sorrow as she was mobbed by photographers.

I like *blue*.

Her nylons were just the right shade of *brown*.

Cristina always wore *red*.

Yellow is my favourite colour.

However, the more frequent colour words can be used in the plural, or in the singular with a determiner and a modifier or qualifier, to refer to different shades of a colour.

In autumn, the changing colour of the beech forests drapes the country in *browns and reds*.

It is light and airy, painted in a *green* which Candida mixed herself to match the *green* of the leaves and trees outside.

Its hull is a *deep red* and its upper decks *white*.

Groups of colour words

Colour words all indicate the colour that something or someone is. They belong to the

following groups:

- 1 THE 'BLUE' GROUP
- 2 THE 'FAWN' GROUP
- 3 THE 'CHOCOLATE' GROUP
- 4 THE 'CANARY YELLOW' GROUP

1 THE 'BLUE' GROUP

These words indicate the basic colours.

The walls had been painted **blue** and decorated with lifebuoys.

Blues and **yellows** are popular colour choices and fabrics can be mixed and matched.

black	green	pink	white
blue	grey	purple	yellow
brown	orange	red	

2 THE 'FAWN' GROUP

These words indicate various shades of the basic colours.

The woman in blue obviously knew him and she'd introduced him to the woman in the **fawn** coat: they'd shaken hands.

Newly-discovered **mauve** and **magenta** hues were all the rage for the mid-Victorians.

aqua	crimson	maroon	taupe
auburn	dun	mauve	tawny
azure	ecru	navy	ultramarine
beige	fawn	puce	umber
blonde	hazel	russet	vermillion
buff	indigo	scarlet	
carmine	khaki	sepia	
cerise	magenta	tan	

3 THE 'CHOCOLATE' GROUP

These words indicate that something is the same colour as some other substance or thing, often a food, a plant, or a stone.

He had **chocolate** eyes, thick, curly hair, and a bushy black moustache.

Driving down through the foothills to the coast, our road threads its way through an **emerald** valley of great scenic beauty to reach the Black Sea.

She re-emerged after lunch in what the journalists eventually agreed was an **oatmeal** cardigan.

Sometimes a colour word of this type has a fixed meaning, even though the thing itself can be a variety of colours. For example, **lilac** always means pale purple, even though lilac flowers are sometimes white.

Sophie was wearing **lilac**, a crepe wool dress with a hat to match.

amber	chocolate	gold	mustard
amethyst	claret	ivory	oatmeal
apricot	cobalt	jade	ochre
aquamarine	coral	lavender	olive
bronze	cream	lemon	peach
burgundy	emerald	lilac	platinum
chestnut	ginger	magnolia	plum

rose	saffron	terracotta	wine
ruby	sapphire	turquoise	
rust	silver	violet	

4 THE 'CANARY YELLOW' GROUP

These colour words consist of two words combined together. They can be two colour words, as in **navy-blue** or **olive green**, or a noun and a colour word, as in **blood-red** or **bottle-green**, or an adjective and a colour word, as in **royal blue**.

He wore foppish hats, **canary-yellow** gloves, and patent-leather shoes.

Seen in spring from the valley below, the ancient city of Pinara in Southern Turkey is a blaze of **lime green**.

baby blue	duck-egg blue	milk white	sea-blue
baby pink	electric-blue	navy-blue	sea-green
blood-red	grass green	nut-brown	shell pink
blue-black	ice-blue	off-white	shocking pink
bottle-green	jade green	olive green	sky-blue
canary yellow	jet black	peacock blue	slate-grey
cherry red	leaf green	powder blue	sugar pink
chocolate brown	lemon yellow	rosy pink	
coal black	lime green	royal blue	
cobalt blue	midnight blue	salmon pink	

Adjectives used to modify colour words

There are a number of adjectives which are used in front of colour words, or are combined with them. They belong to two groups:

- 1 THE 'DARK' AND 'LIGHT' GROUP
- 2 THE 'INKY' GROUP

1 THE 'DARK' AND 'LIGHT' GROUP

These adjectives indicate how light or dark a colour is.

He was wearing **dark green** baggy trousers, a blue long-sleeved chambray shirt and white sneakers.

Flower colour can be from **deep blues** to **pale pinks** or white.

The word 'Horses' is painted in **light blue** above the cab and ramp.

bright	deep	light	pale
dark	dusky	medium	pastel

2 THE 'INKY' GROUP

These adjectives indicate what shade a colour is.

The **cool blue** scheme is carried through into their bathroom.

The lake was noticeably colder, its surface no longer grey but becoming an **inky blue**.

With its **warm reds** and **pinks**, this is an intimate and inviting place in which to sit on cold December days.

cool 4	neutral 7	rusty 3
dead 9	pearly	smoky 2
inky 1	rich 10	warm 3

See also section on 'Colour adjectives' below.

Note that *neutral* and *pastel* are also used in their plural form as nouns.

If your wardrobe's full of **neutrals**, add something bright, even if it's only a silk scarf.

Grant said **pastels** were the big fashion news, with pink being the big colour.

Colour adjectives

One group of words which indicate colour are adjectives only and have no noun uses. They indicate that something has a colour that is similar to another colour, usually one of the basic colours.

A scorpion, with a kind of luminous **greenish** glow to its back, was seen retreating into a sand slit soon after I had risen from my camp bed.

He had several days of stubble on his chin and his teeth were **yellowy** stumps.

The words in this group often combine with colour words. *Pinky* is only used in this way, and *bluey* is usually used in this way.

The Mooloolah River was a beautiful **bluish-green**.

They proved to be Brown Fulvetas, which are fairly nondescript little grey, brown and **greyish-white** birds.

She highlighted Juliana's cheekbones with a **pinky brown** blusher.

blackish	greenish	peachy	reddish
bluey	greeny	pinkish	whitish
bluish	greyish	pinky	yellowish
brownish	orangey	purplish	yellowy

Appendix: Different forms of a pattern

In the English that you read or hear, the elements of a noun or adjective pattern may not appear as they do in the basic pattern given as a heading in this book, or in the examples given in the sections. Below we explain the different forms of a pattern that may occur. We begin with two things that affect both noun and adjective patterns: questions and reported questions, and relative clauses.

1 Questions and reported questions

If a question or reported question relates to an element in a noun or adjective pattern, that element occurs at the beginning of the clause instead of in its normal place.

The following example shows the pattern ADJ at n.

*Who are they most **angry** at?*

The following example shows the pattern ADJ of n.

*They alone knew **what** the man was **capable** of.*

Questions like this are used with noun patterns which may be interrupted by the verb *be*. For example, the noun *story* has the pattern N **about** n, which occurs sometimes as in *The story is about loneliness* (see 'Interruption by a verb group' below). The question relating to this pattern is:

*What's the **story** about?*

The following example shows the pattern N in n.

*What are your **qualifications** in?*

2 Relative clauses

In general, relative clauses begin with a relative pronoun (*who*, *whom*, *which*, *that*) or the determiner *whose*. They occur immediately after the noun group they are qualifying.

The relative pronoun sometimes replaces something that would normally be an element in the pattern of a noun or adjective in the relative clause. In this case, the normal order of the pattern is changed. In very formal English, the preposition itself may occur before the relative pronoun. The following example shows the pattern N **over** n.

*He has a list of things **over which** he would relish a **fight**.*

The following example shows the pattern N **against** n.

*The party **against whom** such a **complaint** is made is normally contacted by a senior official so that it can put its case.*

More usually, however, the preposition occurs at the end of the pattern. The following example shows the pattern N in n.

*We prefer only to deal with countries **that** we have **expertise** in.*

The following example shows the pattern ADJ **about** n.

*Bill Cuneo inspected the work **that** Karen and Tony were **worried** about.*

Often, no relative pronoun is used, in these cases, part of the pattern is missing, though understood. The following example shows the pattern N in n.

*His achievement was something she took **pride** in.*

The following example shows the pattern ADJ **against** n.

There's a lot of people I felt **bitter** against but I have a different attitude now.

The following example shows the pattern ADJ of n.

That was the only thing I wasn't **sure** of.

Other Different Forms of Noun Patterns

1 Pattern affected by a verb pattern

The pattern of a noun may occur in a different form if the noun is itself part of the pattern of a verb. In the following example, a noun with the pattern N to-inf, **duty**, is used with a verb, **impose**, that has the pattern V n on n. The prepositional phrase beginning with **on** comes before the to-infinitive clause.

Section 221 of the Companies Act 1985 imposed a **duty** on a company to keep accounting records.

In the next example, a noun with the pattern N between pl-n, **balance**, is used with a verb, **get**, that has the pattern V n adj. The adjective group comes before the prepositional phrase.

When you're busy actually looking after somebody with a disability, it's very difficult to get the **balance** right between looking after them and making sure that the others don't feel left out.

2 To-infinitive clauses

If a noun has the pattern N to-inf, and if the activity involved has already been mentioned, the noun may be followed by **to** only, rather than by a to-infinitive clause.

He knew he should go back and join the wedding party for the dinner, but suddenly he had no **desire** to.

3 Interruption by a verb group

The noun may be separated from the other elements in the pattern by a verb group.

The following example shows the pattern N that.

Rumours quickly spread that Mr Yeltsin had been the victim of an assassination attempt.

The following example shows the pattern N to-inf.

Attempts are being made to determine the cause of the explosion and the extent of damage.

The following example shows the pattern N about n.

The **story** is about a high-school student and a prisoner, who marry and end up on the run.

The following examples show the pattern N against n.

The clash occurred as **protests** continued against the state of emergency imposed by the President last Tuesday.

Almost inevitably, tragedy ensues when **revenge** is contemplated against the brutal force of law and order.

The following examples show the pattern N as to wh.

Discussions are still going on as to what part of her income will be taxed.

A variety of possible **reasons** have been put forward as to why asthma should be increasing.

The following example shows the pattern N for n.

Permission was refused for a burial in his home of Taiyibe.

4 Interruption by a verb group and adjective group

The noun may be separated from the other elements in the pattern by a verb group and an adjective group.

The following example shows the pattern N that.

Rumours are rife that the Prime Minister may be about to resign.

The following example shows the pattern N to-inf.

Plans are afoot to build a permanent museum dedicated to his colourful career.

The following example shows the pattern N as to wh.

Speculation is rife as to whether he was killed by some recently expelled member of the Party.

The following example shows the pattern N for n.

Competition was stiff for the single place in the 60-strong club left vacant by the death last year of Mark Bonham-Carter.

The following example shows the pattern N for n to-inf.

The **opportunity** was open for an enterprising book publisher in Mainz to do away with the scribes and use machinery to put words on paper.

This form of the pattern is very frequent with the pattern N between pl-n. The following examples show this pattern.

If the **bond** was strong between you and your own mother, the likelihood is that you will develop a strong bond with your own children.

Disputes are likely between the government and the president.

But **tension** is still high between the various ethnic groups.

This form of the pattern is common where **things** or **everything** is used to mean relationship, as in the following examples.

Things are very bad between us.

Jenny has since remarried and **everything** is okay between us.

5 Interruption by elements of another pattern

If a noun has two possible patterns, they may occur together. In this case, the elements of one pattern will interrupt the other pattern. The following example shows two patterns: N against n and N to n.

He has made a formal **complaint** to the English National Board against nine senior nursing officers.

Other Different Forms of Adjective Patterns

1 Pattern affected by another pattern

The pattern of an adjective may occur in a different form if the adjective is itself part of the pattern of another word. In the following example, an adjective with the pattern **it v-link ADJ that**, *normal*, is used with a verb, *see*, that has the pattern **V n as adj**. In this case, the link verb is 'lost' from the pattern.

When water was a state industry, we saw it as normal that we should be asked to economise in hot weather.

The pattern of an adjective may occur in a different form if the adjective occurs in a to-infinitive clause which is part of the pattern of another word. In the following example, an adjective with the pattern **ADJ about n**, *arrogant*, is used in a to-infinitive clause which is part of a pattern belonging to *a good deal*. The noun group that would normally follow the preposition *about* occurs before the to-infinitive clause.

He was an arrogant man with a good deal to be arrogant about.

In the following example, the adjective pattern is **ADJ of n**. The indefinite pronoun *nothing* has the pattern **PRON to-inf**.

You did absolutely nothing to be ashamed of.

The pattern of an adjective may occur in a different form if the adjective is also part of a superlative pattern. In the following example, an adjective with the pattern **ADJ at n**, *good*, occurs as a superlative followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with *in*.

Mike Barrowman is the best in the world at the 200-meter breast stroke.

2 Interruption by a noun

The adjective may be separated from other elements in the pattern by a noun. The following example shows the pattern **ADJ at n/-ing**.

Sam Rosen was a good man at explaining things, and Kelly a good questioner.

The following example shows the pattern **ADJ from n**.

The Prime Minister believes that anyone who has a different view from hers ought to be wiped out.

The following example shows the pattern **ADJ to n**.

It's a similar story to the Bible.

3 Clauses beginning with what and all

Clauses beginning with *what* or *all* can be used as the Subject of the verb *be* in order to focus attention on what comes after the verb. If an adjective pattern occurs in this clause, the order of the pattern elements is changed. The following example shows the pattern **ADJ about n**.

All you're bothered about is going and getting awards and certificates stuck on your office wall.

The following example shows the pattern **ADJ in n**.

What I'm interested in are the facts.

The following example shows the pattern **ADJ of n**.

What we're tired of is simply their words and actions and manipulation.

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and frequency information

As well as showing where to find information on each noun and adjective mentioned in this book, this index indicates how frequent each word is, using black diamonds. The most frequent words have five diamonds ***** and the least frequent have no diamonds.

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